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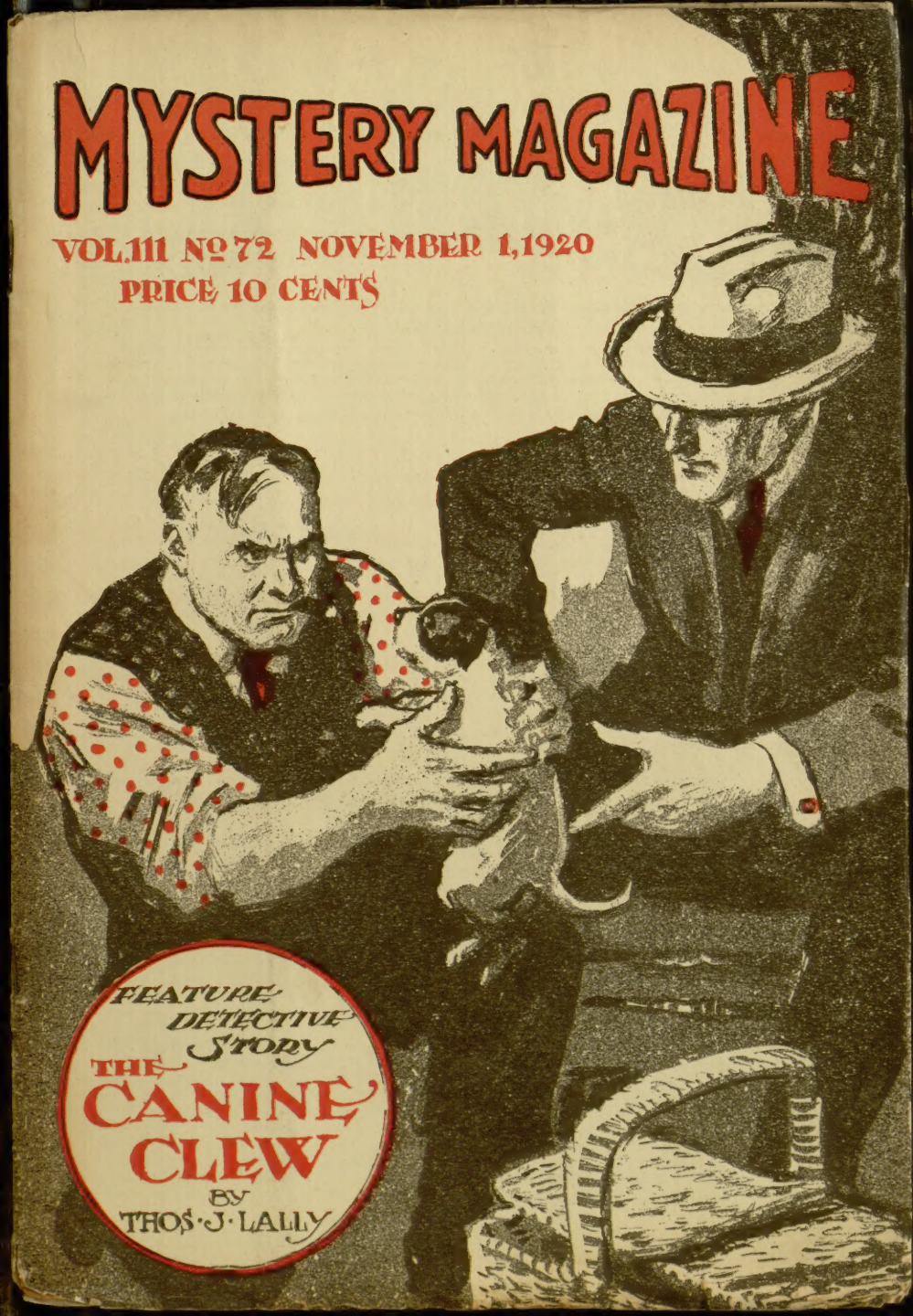
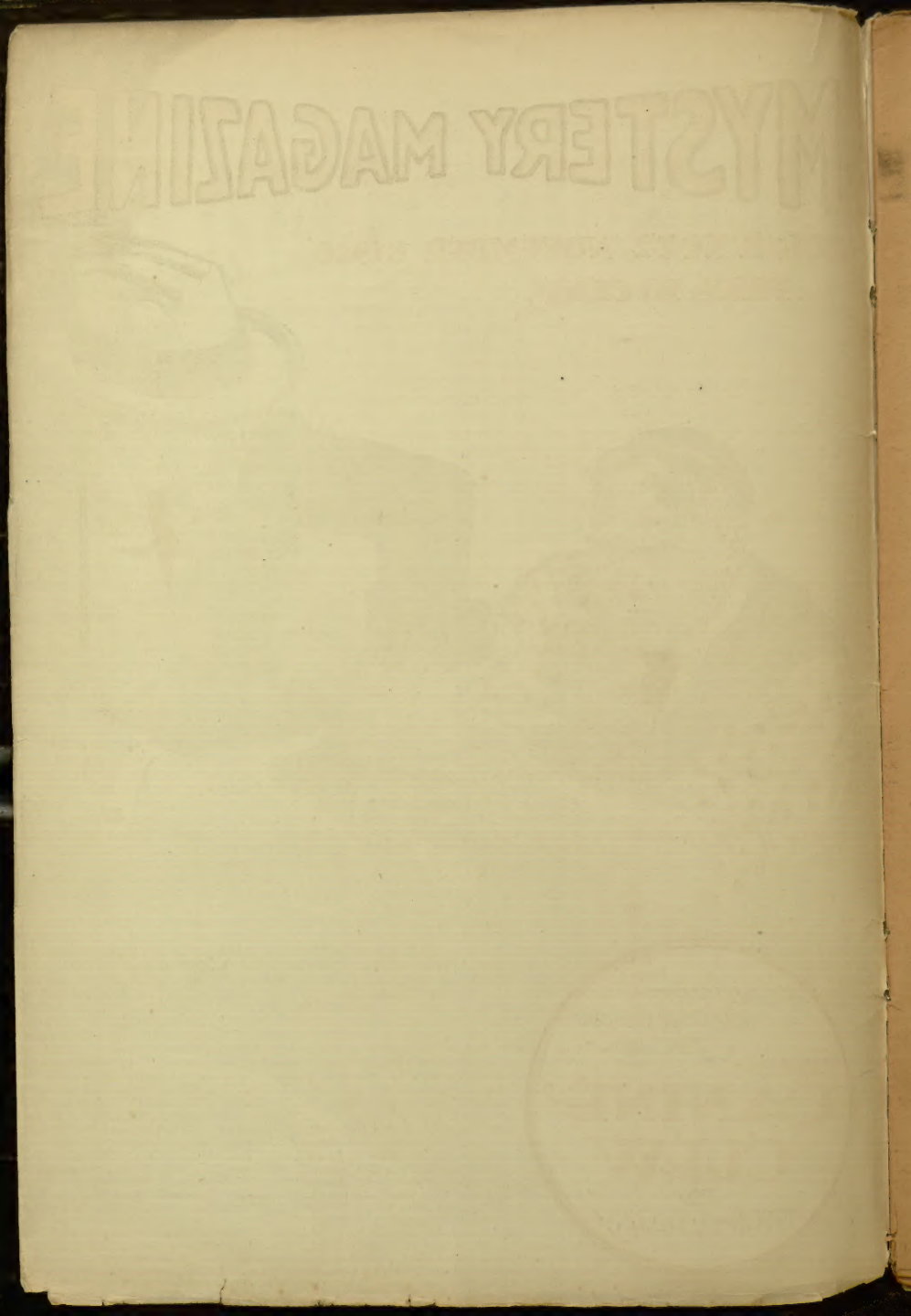


FEATURE DETECTIVE STORY

THE CANINE CLEW

BY THOS. J. LALLY



Our next number will contain "THE PSYCHIC ENEMY."

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

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THE CANINE CLEW

A Detective Story

By THOMAS J. LALLY

THE metallic clang of the last stroke of two, from the clock tower out in Congress Square, was wearing itself out. Its dying tone reached the ear of the cashier of the Calumet National Bank. He glanced up from his cash and figures and inquired for Stinson, the messenger.

"Not back yet, sir,"—came promptly from the ever alert officer on the floor. The cashier went on with his counting and figuring; a serious expression marked his features; he shifted his position in his chair. Then, calling the officer to his window, he said: "I sent Stinson to the 'Sub' ten minutes ago for five thousand dollars in new fifties. He's never been gone so long before. You'd befter look him up."

"Shall I send one of the other messengers, or shall I go?" asked the officer.

"You'd better go, Sam; I'm kind of anxious, somehow or other. I'll be responsible for your absence."

Without any more ceremony the bank's private policeman hurriedly made his way to the Federal Building, losing himself in its great yawning mouth of a doorway. Not waiting for the elevators, he climbed the stone stairs to the second floor, on which was located the United States Sub-Treasury. Reaching this landing, he was laboriously puffing when a bystander, noting his uniform and the name of the bank in gilt letters on his cap, coupled with the great haste he was making, halted him. "I guess you'll find your man in the press room," he said. "They just discovered him on the floor unconscious. If he had any money, he's been cleaned out."

The officer felt a clutch at his heart and then the racing of his veins. He felt he was weaken-

ing through his pores, while the fear of what might have happened was driving great beads of perspiration out over his sickly pale skin to cool.

The press room, to which he was directed, was built in under another stairway leading to the floor above and directly in front of the elevators. It was a cubby-hole-like affair used by the reporters who covered the building in quest of news, and always dark except when being used by them. The furnishings consisted of a long table, a typewriter, some chairs and a lounge. One incandescent light hung over the table and was controlled from a switch on the wall.

On the table in this room lay the unconscious form of Stinson, the bank messenger. An empty pigskin wallet dangling on the end of a leather covered chain was fastened around his waist.

The now thoroughly frightened officer elbowed his way into the room, fearing the worst. One glance at the face of the victim, smeared with blood, brought a cry from his lips.

"My God! Is he dead?" he cried.

"Not so bad as that; but he'll take a good long rest after this, I guess. We've telephoned the Relief Hospital to send up the ambulance. Who is he?"

Before he could answer, a yelping and scratching that emanated from beneath the table sent the inquisitor down on his hands and knees, hunting the cause of this commotion.

Much to the searcher's surprise this proved to come from a pup, a few weeks old. A mysterious discovery was that a "clip" such as is used on gentlemen's suspenders was attached to one of the animal's ears.

By this time the ambulance had arrived and the white uniformed attendants bore the body of the bank messenger away.

Across the street in the great marble pillared bank the news had just been told. A hasty conference of the head officials was being held, a messenger was sent to the hospital with instructions "To spare no expense in caring for the victim of the robbery." The cashier was dispatched to the office of the Secret Service agent to give all the information that was now at hand. After reaching there, he told the following story:

"I knew it was near closing time at the 'Sub' and I wanted this money in a hurry, and to-day sure, so I gave the poor fellow a redemption receipt issued to us yesterday by the government for five thousand dollars in 'rags,' as we call the bills sent to the Treasury for redemption. He placed this receipt in the pigskin wallet that he wore strapped to his waist and started off. Failing to return in his usual length of time, I sent a man to look him up and he came back and reported the robbery."

"Do you know that this receipt was paid," was asked him.

"It was. I telephoned the 'Sub' upon hearing of the crime. They paid it the last thing before closing."

"Did you know that there was a pup found in the room after the body was discovered, with a clip fastened on its ear?"

"I hadn't heard of that, sir," replied the cashier. "What do you make of the circumstances, anyway?"

"Just this—'twas a clever head that planned this robbery, and a nervy person who saw it through. Your messenger was followed when he went to the Sub-Treasury, you may be sure. After cashing the receipt, he entered the corridor to take the elevator down. Now for the clever part. Just as he was entering, this pup was placed on the floor; the clip on his ear pained, causing him to yelp. The messenger, being attracted by its cries, followed it into the press room." The speaker paused, then continuing, said: "From the nature of the wound, I am convinced that a sandbag did the rest, sir."

The cashier sighed. "Poor Stinson. I wish I hadn't sent him."

"'Twasn't your fault," came back the reassuring reply. "The yelping pup got him and perhaps can be used to trap some one else."

"I wish I could be of some assistance to you in this case. Is there anything I can do?"

"Perhaps sir, later on, when things shape up."

The man the cashier was speaking with was Mike Whelan, Secret Service agent of the Boston office, a product of four countries and thoroughly boiled down to the bone. He had been cradled and nourished in Ireland, and disciplined in the English army. What was loose or foolish about him he sweated out in the trenches at South Africa, where he helped "Lord Bobs" try to make good his vain promise to eat his dinner at home on Christmas day. He was now taking orders from Chief Wilkie, and proving himself a worthy adjunct to this branch of the service. As for brains and wit, he was a master and a worthy match for any of the counterfeiters, smugglers, crooks or criminals who were breaking faith with his "Uncle Samuel." Facts he learned and unlearned; what was certain to-day is impossible to-morrow, and that which could not be now, would happen later on.

This man was sitting alone in his office now. The cashier of the bank had been gone some hours. His story gave no clew as to whom the perpetrator of this day's crime might be, and he must have a starting point. He sat watching a puppy on the floor eating a supper of crackers and milk out of a tin plate. The cigar in his hand had grown cold beneath the ash. He raised his head, looked at the old banjo clock on the wall; the hands formed almost a right angle, for it lacked five minutes of nine. At nine the Relief Hospital would call him and let him know how the bank messenger was resting, and perhaps would furnish him with a clew. In the meantime he was "mentalizing" on the crooks whom he knew to be at large, that were crafty enough to pull the pup game. Reaching for a pad, he scribbled a few lines, and tearing off the sheet, filed it in a pigeon-hole in his desk. Knock-

ing the dead ashes from his cigar, he placed it between his teeth, arose, and locked his fingers behind his well-set head. He raised himself on his toes; he was tired. Before his heels felt the floor beneath them again the telephone bell rang.

"Hello! Yes.

"Well, how is he.

"Is that so? Fine! I'm glad to hear it. Came to ten minutes ago and no bad effects, just the scalp wound and a headache. Well, he's a lucky boy.

"But say, doctor, what does he say about the job?

"Is that so?

"Just remembered the pup yelping, and followed it into the room under the stairs. That's all.

"Hello! What? He wants to know what became of the money?

"Just say to him, doctor, that I'll let him know later on. Yes, that's all, doctor, good-by."

Whelan hung up the receiver, pushed his chair back, and said to himself, "Well, I'm sure now of what I had guessed before, anyway. Now to work back and bring the pup, the man and the money together." His fingers snaked their way through his shock of gray-tinged hair, disheveling it fearfully as was his wont when thinking.

"I guess I'll call the bank," he said. By previous arrangement with the cashier, some one in authority was to remain at the bank until late that night, to await advice from him. Getting the bank on the wire, he gave the following instructions: "Ascertain at the Sub-Treasury tomorrow, as soon as it opens, the numbers of the stolen bills. This is possible, as they were the last ones paid out before closing time. The subsequent strap of bills will be one hundred numbers lower.

"When you get these numbers mail notices to all outside banks giving denomination and numbers of the bills. Insert similar notices in all check packages going to the Clearing House tomorrow, with instructions that if anything turns up they shall notify the Boston office of the Secret Service, and to give, if possible, a description of person or persons trying to negotiate the stolen certificates. Send me the numbers also, as I might have some use for them myself. That's all for now. Good-by."

Curled up at his feet, sleeping, lay Whelan's hope of solving this robbery. Stooping down, he picked up said hope by the nape of the neck, placed him on the blotter before him, petting him, as if to gain his good graces. Then taking the animal by the front paws, he held them up, looked into its face, and asked: "Where in the devil did you come from anyway—huh? Where? Can't you speak, dog? Well, I'll find out, that is if I can locate the Crab."

The "Crab," by the way, was one Delaney, a notorious cock-fighter and dog fancier, and known by the name on account of his personal characteristics. Crab made his headquarters at a sporting saloon near Atlantic avenue, along the water front. Whelan knew the owner of this place quite well and was often "tipped" when a "long-lost son" that he was seeking showed up there.

Again resorting to the telephone, he luckily found the saloonkeeper in. His inquiry for the Crab at that hour of the night seemed unusual, and after some sparring for time on the part of the proprietor, and questions as to whether the Crab pulled something on the government, Whelan replied: "Nothing on the Crab. I just want to use him. If he's there, send him up. I'll wait till eleven."

"All right," came back the answer. "I'll send him up."

The night man on the elevator in the Federal building was just ready to go home, his shift being over at eleven p. m. It was near that now. His indicator clicked. Looking up, it showed that some one on the basement floor had signaled him. Throwing his lever forward, the car descended; and as it stopped, he pulled back a bolt, opening the door. In stepped an undersized, freckled-faced individual who without hesitation said: "Fourth floor, bo, please. De Secret Service guy tinkled fur me to come up. He wants to see me."

"Whom do you mean by the Secret Service guy?" asked the elevator operator.

"Ah! get wise, get wise; whatcher trying to hand me, anyway? Do I look like a piece of cheese? Bo! dere's no holes in me, for you to poke yer kiddin into, see? I means de flip one, de top floor gazabo, de gaffir dat ropes de kinkies Jat try to push de queer green and tin stuff. De lad wot says you can't make money honestly—if ye try to make it like Uncle Sam's."

"I guess you'll do, son," replied the operator, as the car reached the fourth floor, and opening the door to let his passenger out, he gave these directions: "Round to the left, first office on the right." Then he slammed the door and descended in the car, going home for the night.

The sound of footsteps in the gloomy corridor outside made Whelan pause in his deliberation over the events of the day. As they ceased outside his office door, he half arose and listened. The Crab outside was brushing up, previous to entering into the company of such a mysterious and strange personage as he knew was inside. After pulling down his collar, he patted his unkempt head. Then, straightening his necktie and giving a tug at his waistband, he snapped the cigarette he was smoking about fifteen feet across the corridor where it stuck fast onto the wall. Clearing his throat and taking a last glance at his over-run shoes, he rapped. Whelan straightened up, at the same time pulling down the cover of his roll-top desk, thereby making a prisoner of the pup for the time being.

The Crab listening for footsteps was about to rap again, thinking he was not heard, when the door flew open and "Delaney, the Crab" stood face to face with "Whelan, the Fox."

"Come in, Delaney," Whelan broke in. "Sorry to interfere with any plans you may have had for the night, but I wanted to see you very much and am greatly obliged to you for putting yourself out to come. I won't detain you long anyway." Before this little preamble was finished the Crab was ushered into Whelan's inner office. Upon being shown to a chair, he spun his hat around on his finger, crossed his spindle-like legs, hung his hat on the toe of his shoe, and, lastly, pulled a box of cigarettes from his pocket. Taking one from it he offered the box to Whelan with the invitation to have a "tack." Whelan respectfully declined. Thereupon the Crab, who by this time had lighted his "tack" said: "Well, Mr. Secret Service, why did yer tinkle fur me? Something I got yer want to wise up on?"

"Right the first time," replied Whelan, then continuing: "They tell me, Crab, you know dogs like a bird knows its nest. If that's so, I'm going to make you lose your way. I've got a puzzler and if you can guess it right, this is yours"—slowly opening up for Crab's inspection a crisp ten-dollar bill.

The Crab's eyes stuck out of his head at what he saw and heard. This looked to him like easy money. He knew dogs from hair to hide. 'Twas often said if he saw a dog's pelt nailed on a barn door he could recite the dog's pedigree.

Looking straight at the "solver of mysteries" before him, the Crab said: "De game's on; trow out de ball, me man. I'm dere forty ways."

"Well, Crab," said Whelan, "it's just like this. Step out into this room; it's more home-like," and the two men entered the room where the pup was imprisoned in Whelan's roll-top desk. "I've bought a pup for my nephew, and I think I've got a good one, but the party I bought it from would not give the pup's pedigree. He said it came from such good stock that he did not want any one to know it sold for such a ridiculously low price."

"Well, I can't tell anything from yer ent'usiasm, mister. Can't yer let me lamy de poodle?" broke in the Crab.

"That's just what I'm going to do, Delaney. You look it over to your heart's content. Take all the time you want, to get the money. It's right here," and the desk cover went up with a bang.

"What do you think of it," said Whelan, eyeing the Crab for a betrayal of his inability to place the breed. Delaney, panther-like, a flush on his cheek, eyes snapping, approached the desk. The test was on.

Placing his hand under the dog's chin, he raised him till his front feet were off the desk. The Crab raised his cigarette to his mouth, took a long, deep puff, and as the smoke loafed lazily out of his nostrils and mouth, said to Whelan:

"I got yer, bo; got yer sure's I'm my mother's son. I sure know where he come from. He's out of "Blue Bell" by McCue's "Diamond Hill," owned by Marty McCue, the 'gink' what runs the Altos dance hall at Revere Beach. 'Bout six weeks old and will be wort a 'century' when it shapes up a little. Dat's de dope on de poodle, sure's you's a foot high."

Whelan, used as he was to all sorts of men, could not but admire this master of dogs and slang. At the same time he made a mental note of his finding for future reference.

"Here's your ten dollars, Delaney," said Whelan. "I'm very much obliged for your trip up here to-night. It was good of you, I'm sure."

"It's good of you, too, Mr. Man," said the Crab, "to make me a present of this 'tenner'," as he carefully placed the money in his fob pocket, which was securely tucked under his belt. At the same time, he moved toward the door. Whelan, anticipating his movements, had opened the door and escorted him to the head of the broad iron stairway. Here he bade him goodnight and then returned to his office. The Crab went out into the tunnels and caves of vice and sin in the subway of life, to spend some easy money in the land of "What's the use."

Once inside his office, Whelan wrote on a card:

Marty McCue, Los Altos Dance Hall
Revere Beach
Blue Bell Diamond Hill

Then picking up the pup, he made it comfortable in the snugness of his leather-covered armchair. Going to his locker, he took down his hat and set it carefully on his head. Filling a delicately-colored calabash, he lit it, and taking a farewell look at his hope turned off the lights, leaving the now deserted Federal building for the night.

When Whelan awoke the next morning, after less than half a night's sleep, he was "fit as a fiddle." Always in the best of physical condition, a few hours' rest worked miracles with his well-cared-for body. Following his cold plunge, he carefully dressed and took a car downtown. After eating sparingly of eggs, coffee and rolls, he called to see a friend in the hardware department of one of the big stores and from him procured a cheap basket. Then repairing to his office, he ensconced the pup within, and started off with his precious freight in quest of Marty McCue, the dance hall owner and breeder of dogs of Revere Beach. By trolley to the beach was perhaps an hour's ride, and buried in the morning paper, Whelan was at his destination before he hardly realized it. Getting off the car, a crossing policeman, in answer to his inquiry, directed him to the place of McCue, which proved to be a very attractive and well-kept beach dance hall. A sleepy attendant shrunk into a chair at the entrance was brought to life long enough to part with the information that the "boss" was down under the stage, patching up a fight he had the night before with the leader of the orchestra.

"Is it possible to see him?" asked Whelan.

"Sure, hike right in," was the lazy reply.

And the detective pushed open the door that

stood partly ajar, as he looked around for the stage. He soon located it by the array of empty music racks and artificial palms. The sound of his footsteps on the highly polished floor brought a head through a small door leading under it, and an invitation to come in. Whelan readily complied, and, once inside, he surveyed his surroundings with the trained eye of a man of his calling.

The leader of the orchestra was ready to depart; they apparently had fixed up their difference of the night before, and standing with his bushy head bared, he was just saying: "Well-a good-a-by, Meester Marty."

"Good-by, Tony."

"We play a nice-a mussek to-night, aw-right."

"Well, see that you do, Tony."

"Good-a-by."

"Good-by, Tony."

"These ginny fiddlers are the limit," said McCue when they were alone.

"I suppose they are," replied Whelan lazily, then in the same breath asked: "How are the dogs?"

"Punk," was shot back at him sharp and decisive.

"Want to buy a good one, McCue?"

"Whatcher got?"

"A blue ribbon doll," said Whelan.

"Produce."

Up came the cover of the basket. McCue shot a glance toward the bottom. "Well! What the h——!" His face was ready to burst with blood pressure, his eyes glaring, his whole form agitated with excitement.

"Want to buy him, Mister McCue?" Whelan was an iceberg personified.

"Buy him! Why, man, he's mine. That's my dog!" and clinching his fists till the nails cut into the flesh, he continued: "If I could only lay my hands on the four-flushing piker that pinched him I'd make him holler for his grandmother so quickly that the sound would never get out of his stomach."

"What four-flushing piker do you mean?" said Whelan, urging the infuriated man on.

"Frenchy," he exploded.

"Who, French Joe?" mocked Whelan.

"That's him, French Joe," and the name was torn and ragged from the manner in which he jammed it between his teeth.

Whelan relaxed and smiled. Putting his hand on the dog fancier's shoulder, he said in his prettiest manner: "Sit down, old man; don't get excited, I guess the dog is yours. You're welcome to him, anyway. And now, if I could trouble you for your card, I will leave you alone to welcome him home."

McCue was in a trance. This little speech and the detective's manner brought him up sharp at right angles with himself. Fishing a card from his upper vest pocket, he handed it over, at the same time receiving one in return. Then Whelan was gone, McCue was dazed, drugged with surprise.

When he thought to look at the card in his hand, he would have burst if he hadn't blurted out: "Well, what do you know?

"MICHAEL WHELAN,
"Secret Service Agent,
"Boston, Mass.

French Joe, you're a-gone gosling with that boy at your heels."

Mike Whelan sat in his office in the Federal building. It was the day after his interview with the owner of the pup at Revere Beach. From a pigeonhole in his desk he took a slip of paper and drew a line through one of the two names written on it. The name he failed to cross was in red ink, and was that of the person he suspected most, when he made up his mind as to the two men who could frame this robbery. That name was Joseph LeClair, alias French Joe.

Yesterday, after his suspicions were strengthened, he tried to locate Joe, visiting the places of shady character at which the crook frequently called, and also made a side trip to "T" wharf, the fishermen's paradise. Joe sometimes went to the Grand Banks on a cruise to keep out of the way after doing a job. But not this time, Whelan was told, because he was being 'laid fer' for trimming one of the crew out of his share of the last catch.

So this morning Whelan was going to spend in his office, doping the case out. His pipe might help him, he thought. Fishing an old 'fire box' out of a drawer in his desk, he loaded it to the rail and with three or four strong puffs, coaxed the flame from the lighted match down to kiss the weed into a bright red glow. As the atmosphere began to get the "tang" of burning tobacco, Whelan settled deeper into his leather-covered chair, to more comfortably peruse the happenings of the past twenty-four hours as chronicled in the *Morning News*.

A half-stifled grunt of satisfaction at the flavor of his pipe and the crisp crackling of his paper as he turned from page to page was all that marred the silence. The city noises were barred out by the sombre granite walls of the grim old Federal building.

His face reflected the healthy interest he was taking in his reading, now tense, now relaxing. All at once he started; the expression left his face like the ghost of a cloud chasing the sun from a summer-time landscape. His eyes seemed to sink into his head, the pupils contracting to pin points as he held them riveted on something strange in the news items. Leaning forward, fearful lest some unseen power might cause it to disappear, and be lost to him forever, he reached for a blue pencil and outlined the space which his eyes never left. His pocket-knife was out in a second, quickly opened, and its keen edge followed the lines of the pencil. Inserting its point beneath it, he lifted the section out of its bed of black and white. Quickly crossing the

room to a filing cabinet, he opened a drawer, took out a card and made comparisons. Putting this card in his pocket, on which were the measurements and general description of one Joseph LeClair, by the Bertillon system, taken on a previous occasion by Uncle Sam's men, Whelan grabbed his hat and was gone from his office. On the floor where it had fallen was the clipping. Dated at Manchester, N. H., and stating that a man, apparently of foreign birth, had been found by the side of the tracks in the freight yards of that city, horribly mangled. The only article found on his person was the business card of an amusement resort at one of the popular beaches near Boston.

A few hours later a stranger alighted from a north bound train at the Manchester Depot. Looking up the station agent, he inquired regarding the victim of the previous night at the freight yard. That worthy officer directed him to an undertaking establishment located on the principal street in the city. Hither the stranger went.

The undertaker, a ministerial and cadaverous looking individual, appeared as though he'd need a professional brother's services before many days. However, he was very polite and courteous when the stranger entered and asked if the victim's body was in his charge and if he might see it. The caretaker of the dead answered with pleasurable anticipation, hoping that the body would be identified. Inviting the stranger into his back room, he mournfully approached the rattan embalming board on which the body reposed, and as the stranger drew alongside, removed the rubber blanket that covered it. The stranger drew back. The face had no story to tell him or anybody else; it was crushed beyond recognition.

"Any marks on the body?" he asked, at the same time taking a card from his pocket.

"An anchor and crown on the left forearm."

"Did you notice any scar on the left ankle?"

"Yes, sir, there's a trident scar there, with the middle prong reaching far above the others."

The stranger nodded. "What became of his clothing?"

A bundle wrapped in paper was brought from a closet and opened. The suspenders only were examined by the stranger, especial attention being paid to the side with the clip missing. The one on the other side was carefully compared with one which the stranger took from his pocket.

"Did he have any money on him?"

"No, sir, the only article found on his body was this card." The stranger took the card that was handed him, similar to one he had received from McCue, at Revere Beach.

"Do you know him, sir?" asked the undertaker.

"Only by name and reputation," responded the stranger. "His origin or friends are unknown to me."

"Would you care to tell me his name?"

"Oh, no, not at all, his name is Joseph LeClair, sometimes known as 'French Joe.' This man has quite a history, permeated with the atmosphere of the underworld. More than this I don't care to say, any more than that my interest in the case is one of self-satisfaction." The stranger then offered his thanks to the custodian of the body, bade him good-by, and departed.

At five o'clock that same afternoon Mike Whelan, the Secret Service man, emerged from the train shed of the North Station in Boston, having just arrived on the Northern express due at that hour. A puzzled expression was on his face; he was entirely oblivious to his surroundings as with the unseen fingers of experience he was picking over the snarl as it had taken from in his brain.

What became of the stolen money? That stuck in his crop. Was he going to be baffled by a dead man? Would a wooden box and six feet of earth conceal from him the secret of the missing five thousand dollars? A street urchin aroused Whelan from his reverie by yelling up into his face: "Hy, Mister, the squirrels got yer? Yer nutty—talking to yerself?" Open-eyed and surprised, Whelan, regaining his mental equilibrium, remembered saying half aloud: "Well, not so you'd notice it." And the detective meant it. In thirty minutes from the time this incident happened on the street he emerged from the office of Harry Waterman, Chief Post Office Inspector of this district, armed with a letter of introduction to all postmasters in Northern New England, and asking their assistance and co-operation in any matter that Whelan might suggest. The next day he started north again, with one solitary, skimpy, weakling of a fact.

That fact was, that one hundred new gold certificates weighed five ounces. On this wisp of a clue, gleaned from his field of circumstances, he would reap the harvest.

On the afternoon of the third day he was at Island Pond on the Canadian border. After presenting his letter of introduction to the postmaster of this little hamlet he was allowed to go back of the office and go over the mail still uncalled for, with the aid of the clerk in charge. One after another letters were being examined. The clerk was passing them to Whelan, when suddenly he was stopped by this remark, let go by the investigator: "This looks like the goods." An envelope bearing an address in French was handed him. "Weigh it, please," he said.

The clerk complied. "Just five ounces and a half."

"How long has that been here?"

"The clerk, looking at the receiving stamp on it, replied: "It arrived at 8.30 a. m., on Tuesday."

"May I look at it again, please?"

The clerk handed it over, wonderingly, as his visitor had not even hinted at what he might be hunting. Whelan turned the envelope over casually, noted the sending stamp on the back, dated the day of the robbery, which was Monday. The time stamp showed that it was mailed at the Cen-

tral Postoffice at Boston within fifteen minutes after the crime was discovered.

The billiard room of the Parker House in Boston was aglow with bright lights. The clicking of ivory balls were beating a lively tattoo as they were shot from bank to bank across the tables. The players, all prosperous looking business men, were laughing and chaffing each other in high glee as their reckoning of the angles proved false. Now and then some player or other made a high run. Then, in true sportsman fashion, the cues were tapped on the floor, applauding his skill.

In a corner, one leg dangling over the arm of his chair, Whelan sat watching the door leading into this room. Now and then he'd get up, roam through the office and lounging-room, then back to his chair in the corner. Now, taking his watch from his pocket, he noted the time, and calling the attendant of the tables, asked him a question.

"He hasn't been in to-day," was the response.

Whelan got up and started to leave, when a bewhiskered gentleman, dressed in a natty business suit and displaying a heavy gold watch chain strung across his vest front, from which dangled a diamond-studded charm of peculiar design, stepped to his side. He had just come in unseen. Placing his hand on the detective's shoulder, he half whispered: "Well, what have you been doing for us, Mr. Whelan?"

Whelan turned, recognized his questioner as the cashier of the bank whose messenger had been robbed. Taking him aside, he answered: "Oh! nothing much, just earning a thousand dollars a day for you, that's all." It was the fifth day after the robbery.

"You don't mean to say you've found the money, do you?" asked the now eager-faced cashier.

"Well, yes and no; that is, I think I've had it in my hands, but as I did not see it, I'm not so sure about it."

"I don't just get what you mean, Whelan. But then, I confess I'm green to the ways of men of your profession. Can't you make it a little plainer to the uninitiated?"

"Not just now. You know I'm like a physician diagnosing a difficult case, awaiting sure signs to develop before predicting the outcome. Yet I feel safe to say the money will be restored to the bank in due time."

"Do you consider that statement positive enough that I may repeat it to the directors?"

"Why, yes, of course; but tell them also that 'Patience is a virtue'."

"That is highly satisfactory to me, Whelan, and I am sure our people at the bank will appreciate your work in this case beyond words. I would like very much to have you call at the bank occasionally and talk over developments."

"I would like to call on you very much," replied Whelan, "but I am starting on a month's vacation to-morrow, and by the time I get back there won't be anything to talk over. However, I'll call and see you then."

It was just a month and a week since the robbery of the messenger due to his curiosity regarding the yelping pup. The victim had fully recovered from his beating and was back at his job. Things at the bank had assumed normal aspects.

The directors sat around their table in the elaborate and richly furnished room set aside for their deliberations and schemes in the world of money.

The door of the room opened; a uniformed attache of the bank approached the table and handed a card to the president of the board. The meeting had not yet come to order.

This worthy official read the card and said calmly, "Show him in."

The attache, who was all respect and dignity, stepped to the door, made a beckoning gesture with an upraised finger, and ushered the visitor into the presence of the bank's honorable board of directors.

The president arose, grasped the stranger by the hand, and turning to his colleagues, said: "Gentlemen, we have the pleasure of having with us this afternoon Mr. Michael Whelan of the U. S. Secret Service. Mr. Whelan, we are greatly indebted to you for your visit. We are now at your service."

Whelan bowed and smiled, and thanking the venerable old man who welcomed him, stepped to the table. Taking an envelope from his inside pocket, he laid it before him, at the same time addressing himself to the body assembled in these words:

"Some time ago one of your messengers had the misfortune to be waylaid and robbed of government property, the loss being five thousand dollars. Through the kindness of the U. S. Government, out of whose possession this money has been less than twenty minutes in all that time, I have the pleasure to return it to you intact. The strap binding the bills has never been broken. This finishes my interest in the case, gentlemen, and I would be pleased to have this form filled out, acknowledging the receipt of the money, after you have counted it."

The cashier was called in to count and receipt for the stolen money. Whelan accepted the receipt calmly and was ready to take his leave.

The gray-haired president, with the grace of a Chesterfield, excused himself and asked Whelan what he meant by the statement, "In all the time since the robbery, the money had been out of the government's possession only twenty minutes."

"Well," Whelan said, "you see it was like this; your messengers were watched for days. This particular one was selected as the victim, the yelping pup being used as a decoy. The success of the plan you must admit, gentlemen. After the crime was committed the perpetrator placed the money in an envelope which he had in his

possession, and which was addressed to himself in a little town on the Canadian border. Going downstairs to the Postoffice, he dropped it in the mail and then leisurely made his way to this little hamlet up north. By chance I saw an account in the paper where a man had been killed in a New Hampshire city. A card he had on him interested me, and I concluded he stole the money. As it was not found on him, however, I thought he might have used the mails for safe-keeping. Upon investigation my theory proved correct. Then I was obliged to await the rules of the Postoffice Department, which provides that all letters not called for in two weeks be advertised for the same length of time, and if not called for then forwarded to the Dead Letter Office at Washington. This being done, I called there, having in my possession the numbers of the stolen bills. Through our office at Washington, I had the money turned over to me, and by me, to you. It was all brought about by the pup."

As Whelan stepped through the door, he heard the old gray-head say: "The government that backs the Stars and Stripes is backed by mighty clever men.'

KOH-I-NOOR STORY INCOMPLETE

ALL the world has heard of the Koh-i-noor, or, as it has been sometimes called, the Great Mogul diamond, and it would seem that there was nothing more to be said about it. Yet in point of fact not a tenth part of its history has ever been traced, so far does it extend back into the vistas of the past, writes Eleanor Maddock in Asia. Perhaps one of the strangest things about it is that it cannot be lost to the world indefinitely. It was bricked and plastered up in a wall and miraculously found after its former owner had been murdered. It was twice thrown away as a bit of glass and once went to the laundry in the pocket of an Englishman's linen suit, from which it was rescued and returned to its owner.

This matchless gem is called in India the "Mountain of Light" and the "Talisman of Kings;" the latter because it was said to bring sovereignty to its possessor. Strangely enough, after it fell into the hands of a Turkish slave of illegitimate origin, a line known as the "Slave Kings" sat on the throne of Delhi for eighty years, during which period the desire to possess the talisman amounted to a frenzied obsession. Suddenly it disappeared from their possession in the chaos of slaughter that brought the slave dynasty to an end in 1290.

The Koh-i-noor later scintillated without bloodshed through the reign of Shah Jahan down to his son Aurangzeb, who exhibited it to a number of Europeans whom he was entertaining at his court. Among them was Tavernier, the French jeweler, who later wrote a descriptive account of it for the delectation of Europe. After being tossed like a shuttlecock in the Delhi loot, and remaining for a period of years with the Sikhs in the Punjab, this most celebrated diamond in the world now rests on a purple velvet cushion among England's crown jewels, in the grim old Tower of London.

MUSICAL SOUNDS MADE BY WOOD

THE next time you go to church or into a picture show of the modern pattern and listen to the soft tones of the organ coming from you know not where ponder what makes these tones, says the American Forestry Association of Washington, for these tones in most cases come from wood.

To a Philadelphian goes the credit for discovering the possibilities of getting tones from wood in this fashion. Strange as it may seem, the discovery is due to the soft patter of raindrops on a cedar shingles roof. When Philadelphia's roofs were mostly covered with shingles Gottlieb Hittelberger listened to the rain fall and noted the different sounds, and from that he worked out the pipe organ.

A tremendous industry is founded upon the use of more than two hundred million feet of wood every year in the manufacture of musical instruments. On this subject the American Forestry Magazine says:

"Most softwoods listed in this industry do not owe their place to their resonance. Such softwoods as hemlock, Douglas fir, yellow pine and cypress are demanded for the frames of large instruments to give the necessary strength without too much weight or at too great a cost.

Of the hardwoods, maple leads all the others, more than forty-five million feet a year being used. Maple is an all-around wood—an outside wood for show, an inside wood for strength. Its chief place is for frames and braces, and its hardness gives it a special place in piano actions and for the bodies of fine violins.

"In quantity spruce exceeds the other softwoods. Wood consists of fibres which may be compared to strings either parallel or interlaced. Most of those of spruce are parallel, hence their fine musical qualities. Most other woods have shorter fibres and they may not be arranged so that they can vibrate freely, one interfering with another. Oak is a wood of that kind, and it is very poor material for sounding boards for pianos.

Trinkets Of Tragedy

By D. L. RADWAY

HARRISON ELLIOTT sat at his desk with all the New York morning papers spread out before him. He was busily comparing their respective accounts of the death of a curio dealer named Fagin. He was so deep in the mystery that he did not realize—or at least he did not appear to realize—that a caller stood impatiently waiting at his elbow.

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Elliott, but——" the caller began.

"Why, good morning, Major," Elliott said, rising to his feet instantly and extending his hand. "What can I do for you?"

"It's that case there," the Major replied, jerking his head toward the litter of papers on Elliott's desk. "We want your help."

"What? Have the police given up and turned the case over to the Monroe Detective Agency?"

The Major flushed as he gazed at the keen, clean-cut face of the detective, an attractive man of thirty. He wasn't sure, now that Elliott had left the Monroe Detective Agency and set up in business for himself, just how much respect he had for his former employers.

"No. Our client is a wealthy man; I may say one of the wealthiest men in New York. He does not wish his identity revealed. But he wants to save Fagin's niece."

"Well," Elliott commented, leaning back in his desk chair, "Miss Fagin has made that a little difficult. The papers say she has confessed to the murder of her uncle."

"The papers are correct," Major Monroe said gravely. "But her confession is merely shielding someone else mixed up in this nasty mess. At any rate our client demands that we prove Miriam Fagin is innocent. He said if we couldn't do it, you could. That's why I'm coming to you."

Elliott drew himself up sharply. He was a tall man with broad shoulders and just now his square jaw was firmly set.

"It isn't a question whether I can prove her innocent or not, Major. The question is will I prove her innocent. And you may assure——"

"I understand," Major Monroe interrupted hastily. "I shall have nothing to say if you prove Miss Fagin guilty. But there is a possibility—my client assures me there is a certainty—that she is innocent. If you can prove that we——"

"All right, Major," Elliott interposed. "I merely want to be sure that your client understands my conditions. Now, tell me, are the newspaper stories of the murder correct as far as they go?"

"As far as they go," Major Monroe answered.

Elliott turned to his assistant.

"Put on your hat, Davis, and let's have a look at the scene of the murder." They left the office.

As they rode downtown Elliott questioned Major Monroe about his interview with Miriam Fagin.

"She doesn't say much," the Major explained. "When the police arrived she was holding a revolver in her hand. Her uncle was lying on the floor, dead. She said:

"'He beat me and I killed him.' Later at headquarters, when I interviewed her, she said:

"'He wanted me to become a thief, so I—I killed him.' These two conflicting statements gave me the idea that she was shielding someone."

"Was there any one else in the room when the police arrived?" Detective Elliott inquired.

"No one but Miss Fagin," Monroe told him.

"Is she pretty?"

"Pretty? Why, she's a wonderful beauty—the Russian type at its best. She——"

"What sort of a chap was this Fagin?" Elliott interjected.

"Nobody knows. He may have been a bona-fide curio-dealer or a thief's fence—I don't know which."

"Well, we'll soon find out," Elliott remarked, as he stepped out of the taxicab in front of Fagin's shop.

None of the things in the shop seemed to be Russian. There was a large cabinet on legs in Japanese lacquer work, and near it stood a huge statue of a Japanese warrior in armor. At one side was a rack of rugs, such as is used to display the stock of Turkish and Persian dealers. Under the barred window was Fagin's workbench, covered with tools, a quantity of old rugs and newspapers, a few small antiques, and odds and ends beyond description. A policeman sat in a chair near the bench idly tapping his heel with his club as Elliott, Davis and Major Monroe entered.

"S-h-h!" the policeman held up a warning hand. Elliott and his companions stopped.

The officer stepped over to the Japanese cabinet and opened the strangely carved door. There was a squawk, an oath, and a fluttter of wings. The policeman sat down as a black hen, with a black hood over her head, flew out of the cabinet straight at his face. He was on his feet quickly enough and the hen was handicapped by the hood. He had her in his hands after a brief scurry.

Elliott looked into the cabinet, then reached one hand within, and drew out a snow-white egg.

The Major laughed aloud.

"It isn't funny, Major," Elliott said, as he turned the egg over in his hands. "It's odd but it isn't funny. Look here."

As Elliott held up the egg the Major's face changed.

"Isn't that design in black on that egg the same as the one the newspapers reproduced this morning from the broken stick of a fan Fagin had in his hands when he was shot?" Elliott inquired. "I think we'd better have a look at that fanstick. In the meantime we'll just put the egg and the hen back where we found them."

The warm egg and the black hen were replaced and the cabinet door closed.

"We're going over to the station, Sergeant," Elliott announced to the policeman. "Don't let anybody open that cabinet."

At the station Elliott secured permission to examine the bit of pearl, inlaid with gold, which had been taken from Fagin's clutch after his death. On the inner side was painted in black a design roughly resembling the Russian coat-of-arms. Except that it was less regular and perfect it was the same as the design on the egg which Elliott had found in the Japanese cabinet.

"What do you think of this, Davis?" Elliott asked quizzically.

"I don't think anything," Davis answered promptly. "I can't see what a black hen and a white egg with a design painted on it and a fan with a similar design have to do with Fagin's murder. The man may have had a mania for painting such a design—but what of it?"

"Doesn't it strike you that this bit of pearl inlaid with gold is a very unusual piece of work?"

"It is unusually intricate in design," Davis admitted.

"The thing is not only intricate, but old. That fan was made in the seventeenth century."

"How on earth did you deduce that?" Davis asked with his mouth agape.

"I didn't deduce it. I happen to know it," Elliott answered enigmatically. "I want to talk to this girl you've got locked up, sergeant," he continued, "and if you don't mind, I'll just take this bit of fan with me." They went to the police station.

Miriam sat gazing stonily in front of her. Apparently she was not aware of Elliott's presence as he entered. With her brows knit and her lips compressed, she continued to fix her intense gaze upon the opposite wall.

"A penny for your thoughts, Miss Fagin," the detective said pleasantly. "But I can guess. You are thinking of your uncle?"

Miriam turned as quickly as if she had felt a sudden electric shock. Though ghastly pale, with a look of momentary terror in her eyes, a wave of red instantly imbued her cheeks when she saw the private detective.

"How you startled me!" she said, forcing a smile. "I did not hear you coming."

"I've come here to help you if I can," Elliott told her. "Will you tell me just what happened after you heard that pistol shot yesterday?"

"I—I can't," she exclaimed. "There are reasons why it's impossible. I——"

"It won't be necessary," Elliott interjected. He already knew that her confession was only a blind—that she was shielding some one.

"Do you happen to know Mr. Frederick de Peyton-Reuter?" he inquired.

The girl's lips were gray and drawn, her features hard set, her eyes widely dilated, and glittering feverishly.

"Yes," she said, her voice strained and tense. "I know him."

Elliott slowly took the piece of the fan from his pocket and extended it toward her. "Have you seen this before?" he asked sharply, with eyes intent on her expression.

Miriam Fagin shrank as if from a knife when she saw the fan stick. A shudder shook her from head to foot. She turned as pale as if suddenly death-stricken, with terror in her eyes, and on her ghastly face a look of agony and horror beyond description.

"Don't—don't!" she gasped, her teeth chattering. "Take it away. It's—it's his." She suddenly realized that she was saying too much, so to Elliott's further questioning she vouchsafed no answer whatever.

Elliott sat silently musing all the way back to his office.

Once inside Davis asked eager questions.

"You do think there is a mystery here, do you?" Elliott said, with his quizzical smile.

"Well, I'd like to know what it's all about," answered Davis.

"I'll tell you what some of it is about," Elliott promised. "In the first place this bit of pearl is part of a fan made in the seventeenth century. It is the only one of its kind in the world. It belongs to the de Peyton-Reuters."

"The de Peyton-Reuters," Davis gasped.

"The de Peyton-Reuters. This black design is not the Russian coat-of-arms, although it looks something like it. It is the secret sign of a Russian order—I won't bother you with the Russian words, but the English of it is 'Black Magic.' The order dates back to the Cabalists. Did you ever hear of the Cabalists?"

"Never."

"Then I recommend you to look over this book," Elliott continued, as he drew a volume from his shelf, and turned the pages. "It tells of the Cabalists, and a good many other things not so innocent as they were. Look here."

Davis saw Elliott had opened a page which showed the black design on the fan. Underneath he read: "Black Magic."

"I feel," Davis said, "as if I were back in the

middle ages. What has this sort of tommyrot got to do with the twentieth century?"

"That's the point," Elliott explained. "You are back in the middle ages, and you are in the twentieth century. You must always remember that there are all sorts of people in the world—from those who are no more influenced by education or training than the cave man down to the best minds of the day. There are thousands in the interior of Russia today who still believe in ghosts and witches. You and I don't, but we must take account of those who do. But I think we'd better have a talk with young Frederick de Peyton-Reuter. He's the only member of the family who is likely to be interested in a beautiful Russian girl. Send for him, and make him understand that the matter is important enough to bring him here."

It was an agitated young man who stepped into Harrison Elliott's office an hour later. He found the detective gazing intently at the picture of a beautiful girl—Miriam—which he had procured at headquarters. But he put it down immediately, and turned to his caller, who gasped:

"How did you find out? Has Major Monroe been——"

"Major Monroe has not betrayed your confidence, Mr. de Peyton-Reuter," Elliott assured him. "I have asked you to come here because I find that a bit of pearl which I happen to know belongs to your family was found tightly clutched in the hand of a murdered man yesterday. I wish you'd tell me what you know about it."

"I'll tell you everything, Mr. Elliott," young de Peyton-Reuter answered. "I want to keep my name out of this thing, if I can, but I want it cleared up, even if I can't. I've got to save that girl."

"She interests you, does she?"

"I love her," de Peyton-Reuter answered firmly. "I wish to marry her."

"I see," said Elliott. "Go on."

"Two months ago I broke the fan by accident. It is a valuable thing. I thought I would say nothing about it, if I could have it repaired. I took it to Fagin, and he said he could fix it. While I was talking to him, his niece came in. It was a case of love at first sight as far as I was concerned. I dropped in the next day, ostensibly to see if the fan was finished, but really to see Miriam. I've been calling there nearly every day since."

"Why did Fagin take two months to do it, and then fail to complete the job?" Elliott asked.

"I don't know. He always had some excuse when I asked, and after the first few times I didn't ask. I hoped it would take a long time to fix it, because when it was done, I would no longer have an excuse for calling at the shop," de Peyton-Reuter explained frankly.

"Did Fagin approve of your visits?" Elliott continued with his quizzical smile.

"Why, I guess so," de Peyton-Reuter answered. "He knew who I was, and he always seemed pleased to see me. He seemed especially pleased yesterday. Miriam had told him of our love, but he had not mentioned it to me."

"Now tell me just what happened yesterday," Elliott requested.

"I called at the shop about four in the afternoon," de Peyton-Reuter responded. "I asked about the fan, and just then Miriam came in. We went into the room off the shop, and sat down to talk. She said she had a picture of herself that I could have. I waited while she went to get it. While she was gone, I heard a pistol shot in the shop. I rushed in. Fagin was lying on the floor groaning, in a pool of blood. The Japanese warrior—you know that statue he had there?—was rocking as if somebody had run into it almost hard enough to knock it over. At the statue's feet was a pistol. I picked it up just as Miriam came in. Evidently thinking that I had murdered her uncle, she gave a cry and snatched the pistol. I was a little dazed. She said:

"'Go! Go quickly!' and pushed me toward the door. I didn't realize what I was doing. She kept saying 'Go!' and—well, I went," de Peyton-Reuter finished lamely.

"Don't you see what a predicament you left her in?"

"I see it now," de Peyton-Reuter answered. "But I didn't see it then. I was a crazy fool, but I didn't realize what I was doing. I am willing to tell the police the whole story."

"It won't do any good," Elliott said. "They wouldn't believe you. The police aren't going to give up a self-confessed murderess on the strength of such a story as yours, even though it happens to be the truth. And if they did hold you, things would be in just as much of a mess as they are now."

"I will not stand by and see the girl I love punished for a crime she never dreamed of committing, a crime for which she is no more responsible than you are," de Peyton-Reuter exclaimed, and he said it as if he really meant it. "I'd go to prison with her before——"

"What are you going to do about it?" Elliott asked cruelly.

De Peyton-Reuter's audacity left him. His lips trembled.

"I—I—I don't know," he said, as tears moistened his eyes.

"Well," Elliott replied, "perhaps I do. At any rate, we'll see. What do you know about the black hen?"

"The black hen?" De Peyton-Reuter's face was a study.

"The black hen in the Japanese cabinet that sits on a single egg," de Peyton-Reuter answered. "I never heard of a black hen in the Japanese cabinet."

"Then," Elliott remarked crisply, as he rose to his feet, and reached for his hat, "you have

something still to learn about the man who was killed yesterday. If you'll come with Davis and me, I'll show you the black hen and the egg. I'll ask Major Monroe to be there, too. I think he'll be interested."

When Major Monroe saw de Peyton-Reuter with Elliott and Davis, he was so astonished that he remarked involuntarily to Elliott:

"Why, that's my client."

"So I gathered," Elliott answered, imperturbably.

"Well, how—how—how," the Major stammered.

"Never mind, Major," young de Peyton-Reuter admonished. "Mr. Elliott knows everything. If there's anything he doesn't know, it isn't worth knowing."

"What do you think of this, Major?" Elliott interrupted, as he reached within the Japanese cabinet, and drew forth the egg from beneath the black hen, and held it up. "This egg," he continued, "will hatch a black chick."

"I've no doubt of it," the Major interposed. "There is circumstantial evidence that the egg was laid by a black hen. Nothing would be more natural than the chick should be black."

"This black chick," Elliott went on calmly, "will have the power, according to those who believe in Black Magic, to locate hidden gold."

The policeman guarding the store laughed loudly.

"Nonsense," the Major said testily. "Let's be serious, and get down to business."

"I was never more serious in my life, Major," Elliott said earnestly. "This egg, or the chick within, will bring the man who shot Fagin to us. It is perfectly obvious that the man who shot Fagin quarreled with him about this egg. I don't know who the man may be, but my guess is that he is a Russian from the same province as that from which Fagin came. Fagin may not believe in the chick, but the man who shot him did. My theory is that he will be back here to get the chick—he has already committed murder for it; to him it is priceless. All we need to do is to wait for him."

Elliott looked about the room.

"I would suggest that we hide behind that rug rack tonight, and every night until something happens. We'll arrange that there is no policeman on duty here so as to give the murderer a clear field."

The policeman was frankly skeptical of Elliott's theory. The Major was skeptical also, but he did not dare run the risk that Elliott was right. Only de Peyton-Reuter, who had conceived a great admiration for Elliott, was enthusiastic. Davis accepted his chief's suggestion as a matter of course. He had seen Harrison Elliott successful too many times to doubt him, and he had assisted in too many all-night watches to regard this one, which Elliott now proposed, as unreasonable. So it was, that at nine o'clock that night Elliott, Davis, Major Monroe, Inspector Waters, and young de Peyton-Reuter hid themselves behind Fagin's rugs, to watch. They stayed until daylight without hearing anything but snores from the Major. They stayed again the next night, without any greater luck. They stayed again the third night to no purpose. The major and Inspector Waters were frankly disgusted. They decided Elliott was a crazy fool, and Inspector Waters went so far as to say so, though not in Elliott's hearing. Elliott said nothing. He was calmly confident. And when night came, neither Waters nor Monroe dared stay away.

At one o'clock of the fourth night, Elliott touched Davis's arm. Davis passed the signal to the others. Every one was alert, although no one could hear a sound above his own breathing. Slowly the figure of the Japanese warrior beside the cabinet began to turn. As it swung around, a crack of light could be seen in the floor. In a moment a piece of the flooring two feet square rose. It was a concealed trapdoor. Elliott motioned to the others to remain still while he crept to the edge of the hiding-place. His eyes were so accustomed to the dark that he could see perfectly well in the pale moonlight that came through the window over Fagin's bench. As he looked at the trapdoor, a man's head and body, his back turned, came slowly through the opening. His shoulders were so wide that he was having difficulty getting through a hole amply large for an average man. Turning as he rose, Elliott saw a face as fierce and ugly as those carved ones which the Alaskan Indians worship.

The big beast of a man knew what he was about. He crept stealthily to the Japanese cabinet, thrust his hand within, and drew forth a downy black chick, a bit of the shell still clinging to its body. The watchers behind the rugs could hear its plaintive "cheep."

Elliott turned to the men behind him.

"Ready," he whispered. "Jump for him."

The fight that followed was a desperate one. As the four men rushed at the stranger he swung out his arms like flails. Young de Peyton-Reuter went to the floor as if he had been hit by a pile-driver. But the next moment Elliott's foot caught the man behind the knee, and he staggered. Inspector Waters's heavy fist struck him on the jaw at that moment, and the man went to his knees. He fought like a wild animal, kicking, biting, scratching. But he could not get an arm free for one of his swinging blows after the first moment, and it was four against one. In three minutes the handcuffs were snapped fast on his wrists.

Once the man was secured, Elliott produced his flashlight and examined the trapdoor. It led to a basement room which could be reached from the street by a stairway that apparently led into the building next-door. The room was

almost empty, but among the furnishings was a large book containing, among other plates, a copy of the design which distinguished the egg and the bit of pearl from de Peyton-Reuter's fan.

When the big Russian saw Elliott coming up through the trap-door with the book in his hand, he was consumed with rage and hate. He made one desperate effort, and freed himself from the two men who held him. But the policeman's pistol was at his head instantly, and the Russian sank down sullenly, beaten.

It required but a few moments' explanation at the police station to free Miriam. Inspector Waters now saw clearly enough the facts that had been secured by means of Elliott's theory, and his persistence in acting on it. There could be no doubt that young de Peyton-Reuter's story was true. And he was more than convinced after the Russian's confession that he had murdered Fagin to get possession of the black chick.

Elliott, of course, arranged for Miriam's immediate release, and then followed de Peyton-Reuter to her cell. For the first time, Miriam's stoicism, which had been her only defense against hysterical despair, had broken down and she was sobbing in her lover's arms. And now that his Miriam was safe, that young man had forgotten all the reasons that had kept him from publicly declaring himself.

He turned as Elliott came in, and said with passionate earnestness:

"Mr. Elliott, as long as I live I will never forget that I owe my only chance for happiness to you. I can't——"

But Elliott interrupted:

"No thanks, no thanks, please! My happiness in the outcome is almost as great as yours."

Miriam, speechless with joy, pressed his hand softly in answer, as she stood half hidden behind her lover, who had his arm about her.

"The newspapers will have this story all over the front page today," Elliott warned them with a smile.

"Let them," de Peyton-Reuter answered. "What do I care for newspapers?"

And with that he kissed Miriam proudly.

WOULD EXPLORE EARTH'S INTERIOR

"THE skin of an apple measures in the neighborhood of a hundredth of an inch in thickness. The apple—a large one—is, say, four inches in diameter. Enlarge it to the diameter of the earth and the skin will measure about twenty miles in thickness. What do we know about the skin of our apple?" asks the Scientific American Monthly.

"The deepest well ever bored is on the Lake farm near Fairmont, West Virginia. It is a hole six inches in diameter, which was driven to a depth of 7,579 feet, or nearly a mile and a half, before a slide of earth stopped further boring. The deepest mine shaft in the world is at Morro Velho, Brazil, which goes to a depth of 6,400 feet below the surface, or approximately one mile and a filth. So far we have barely begun to gnaw through the skin of the earth. What do we know of the meat of this apple?

"We assume that the center of the earth is hot, very hot indeed. Samples of the earth's interior are hurled out of volcanoes or pour as molten lava from the lips of craters, but we can only guess at the depth from which this material comes. We doubt that the core of the earth is molten.

"We know that as we dig into the earth the temperature rises, but the rise of temperature is not regular; it varies with different localities. In the Lake well referred to above a temperature of 168.6 degrees Fahrenheit was observed at a depth of 7,500 feet. It is assumed that the boiling point would be reached at a depth of about 10,000 feet.

"Because we know so little of the interior of the earth it has been suggested that explorations be conducted into the interior of the earth for the purpose of obtaining scientific information. Some years ago Sir Charles A. Pearsons proposed that a shaft be dug to a depth of twelve miles. It was objected at the time that the enormous pressure of the earth would make it difficult, if not impossible, to dig such a shaft. It was even suggested that the surrounding pressure would actually close the bore.

"However, small scale experiments have been made with high pressures and temperatures which indicate that such would not be the case, and it is probable that the full diameter of the bore could be maintained until so great a depth had been attained that the combined heat and pressure would render the rock plastic and cause it to flow into the bore. This would certainly not take place at a depth of less than thirty miles. No doubt the greatest obstacles to be overcome would be that of high temperature. Special cooling apparatus would be required to reduce the heat sufficiently to enable the workmen to perform their labors."

Sir Charles Pearsons estimates that it would take thirty years to bore such a shaft as he suggests.

The Scientific American says: "Not only would the shaft be of interest to science, but it is quite probable that it would prove of commercial value. Those who have bewailed the fact that we are fast exhausting our stores of coal and oil and have been holding forth a gloomy prospect for posterity may be reminded that there are vast stores of heat confined within the earth which have not yet been tapped. Undoubtedly there are vast deposits of minerals still to be exploited, and it may be that there are materials rich in value yet to be discovered.

Opportunity Knocks

By WINNIE DAVIS FREEMAN

BILL O'REILLEY was sore. Moreover, he was disgusted. Whatever kind of cop was he anyway and how would he ever get that coveted promotion if he couldn't do any better than to let a chit of a girl slip through his fingers like that?

Detective-Sergeant O'Reilley's cankered state of mind was brought about by his failure to apprehend and bring to justice one "Sleight-o'-Hand Annie," who so glibly had plied her trade of picking pockets that she had become heralded as the most nimble-fingered dip artist among the female contingent in Sergeant O'Reilley's particular part of the country.

He had been duly flattered when he had been detailed to get the goods on this girl crook. And he had failed miserably. After weeks of tireless effort and elusive hope he had come to the office of the chief to report that Sleight-o'-Hand Annie was a will-o'-the-wisp, a wraith, a mystic something that did not exist—not at least so far as Sergeant Bill O'Reilley had been able to determine.

He had found the chief out and his office vacant. Thankful for the slight respite which the absence of his boss afforded he seated himself in the most comfortable chair in the office—this being the Chief's very own chair and in front of the Chief's very own desk—and proceeded to wait.

He lolled back in the chair, propped his feet on the rim of the aforementioned desk, lighted a long cigar, pillowed his head on the upholstered back of the chair and let the cooling breezes from the electric fan which stood atop the Chief's desk play havoc with his wavy red hair. Not much exemplification of discipline in Sergeant O'Reilley's pose; but oh, so much of comfort! As he half reclined there idly blowing rings into the air and with ears ever alert for the approach of the boss that he might compose himself accordingly the feeling of disgust which had suffused his system began to dissolve. Sergeant O'Reilley was Irish by name and disposition.

What was the use worrying over the past as long as there was the future? Just because he'd failed on one detail did not mean necessarily that he was a "down-and-outer." Surely, if unfortunately, there was enough crime going on in the world to bring fame to any number of Sergeant O'Reilleys.

He'd heard something about Opportunity knocking once at every man's door. But he didn't remember that it had been recorded that it knocked only once. Of course if you didn't heed the summons—but he had heeded. He'd simply been out of luck. And surely Opportunity wouldn't take his name forever off her visiting list just because of that. Surely she'd knock again——

His thoughts were interrupted by a gentle rap-tap-tap on the outer door of the Chief's office. Sergeant O'Reilley came to attention with a jump. Ah, that might be Opportunity even now. Certainly somebody was knocking, quite distinctly. He'd just open the door and take a peek out and if it was Opportunity——

But when he opened the door he discovered that it was only a woman, a sort of frail-looking little woman, plainly dressed in a blue serge suit and a black sailor hat, who had been doing all the rap-tap-tapping. He had opened the door ready to extend a cordial greeting to Opportunity and to bid her enter. To this little woman, who stood half-timidly just the other side of the door-sill, he merely said:

"Somebody you wanted to see, madam?"

She hesitated just a minute, fingering a handkerchief before replying:

"Yes. I'd like to see—— Are you the Chief?"

O'Reilley grinned.

"Well, not exactly," he replied. But the little piece of unwonted flattery had done its work. Gallantly he stepped aside and gestured the woman to enter. And when she was inside:

"The Chief isn't here now, madam. We're expecting him any minute, though. If you'll be seated——"

"I—I'm afraid I can't wait," she stood half poised just inside the door. "I—I'll come back." She half turned, then re-faced the Sergeant. Slowly she let her glance wander from the top of his head to his shiny boots. Then, as though reassured, she added:

"Perhaps—maybe you'd do."

"If I can serve you——" Sergeant O'Reilley began. Then he placed a chair for her. She seemed so like a frightened little child. "Pray be seated, madam."

She drew her skirts close around her with the air of a person who isn't quite decided, and sat gingerly on the edge of the chair.

O'Reilley waited for her to speak.

"I—somehow I don't know quite how to say what I've come to say," she began. There was the slightest tremor in her voice. "I—I'm afraid that maybe I shouldn't have come—at all——"

"If it's anything—if there's anything I can help with," Sergeant O'Reilley blundered. Although he had been on the police force some time, he retained still a little sentiment about women, especially women like this, little, timid women.

"It—it isn't about myself," she resumed. "It's

about my son. I don't know whether there's really any danger—but I—I'm afraid for him. And I thought if I told the Chief maybe he could advise me——"

"Well, if you'd rather wait and tell the Chief," O'Reilley interrupted.

"No. I can't wait," she continued. "I'll tell you, and then—then if you think I'd better tell him, I'll come back——"

She paused for a brief space as though uncertain where to begin.

"I'll just tell you the little I know, beginning with the time Willie, that's my son, first saw him——"

Sergeant O'Reilley sensing that she was becoming involved and wishing her to get a right start, intervened:

"Saw whom, madam?"

"The man," she replied, "the man I want to tell you about. Willie, my son, he's a messenger boy. And lots of times he has to work late at night. I—I hate to have him do it. He ought to be in school. He's only fifteen."

Sergeant O'Reilley made a mental note to see what could be done about this particular phase of the situation, and waited for her to continue.

"It was about eleven o'clock one night," she picked up the thread of her story, "when Willie went to the man's house with a message. He lives away out on the edge of town, and Willie says there are no houses close around at all. Willie rang the bell, but it was several minutes before the man came to the door. Then when he did he had to go back inside to get the money for the message—it was 'collect'—and Willie—I know he shouldn't have done it, but he did—he stepped in the hall and looked into the room where the man had gone. He saw him standing near a table taking things out of his pockets. He took out a watch, two watches I believe Willie said, and two or three rings—Willie said they looked like diamonds—and then a big pile of money, bills all crumpled up like they'd been stuffed in his pocket in a hurry——"

Sergeant O'Reilley waited impatiently while she twisted the corners of her handkerchief, and seemed to be fumbling for words. When she again started speaking he understood why she paused.

"I hate to tell you all this," she was looking away from him now, "because it looks like my boy ain't quite as honorable as he might be. But he is. He's just curious like most boys. Well, the man picked up one of the bills off the pile and turned around. Willie tried to jump back behind the door, but the man saw he had been watching.

"Willie said he started toward him, shaking his fist, and he looked like he was going to kill him—kill Willie, I mean. Then he came over and put his hands on the boy's shoulders and pressed his fingers into his flesh like he meant it, and said: 'You ain't seen nothin', son?' And Willie, scared as he was, answered: 'No, sir, I ain't seen nothin'.' At that the man grinned and he pressed a five-dollar bill into Willie's hand.

"'That's all right then, son,' he said. 'But if you ever forget,' and he put his hand to his hip pocket, like he was showing Willie he had a gun there.

"Willie left. But he was scared, and he knew there was something wrong. He knew that man hadn't given him that five dollars for nothing. So instead of going out and getting on his wheel right away he went around to the side of the house and peeped through the window of the room where he'd seen the man standing. The shade was up just a little. Willie saw him open a safe in the wall, and then pull some more things out of his pocket and put them and the things he'd put on the table all inside the safe and lock the door."

She stopped speaking and looked up at him as if seeking commendation, or—fearing disapproval.

"And what do you think, madam," Sergeant O'Reilley asked. "What's your idea—that this man's a thie——"

"That he's a—pickpocket," she finished for him, and then caught her lips as though she would call back the word.

"A pickpocket!" O'Reilley repeated the word after her. "Maybe he is. Sounds like it. But we'd have to have something a little more substantial before we could act. We'd have to have some kind of evidence——"

"But my son?" she asked. "Do you think he's in any danger. I'm—I'm afraid for him. He's so reckless. He's—he's been back twice since then—although I've begged him to keep away—and peeped through the window, and both times he's seen the man doing the same thing——"

"You say he has?" Sergeant O'Reilley revived his lagging interest. "How many times?"

"Twice since, that I'm sure of," she replied. "And every time, the first time, too, it's been the day of a big parade in town. That's what made us more suspicious. We thought——"

"Can you give me this man's name and address?" Sergeant O'Reilley's interest had taken a new lease on life. Here was a clue that was a clue. Of course it might be a false alarm. But on the other hand it might turn up something really worth while.

"I don't know his name," the woman was fumbling in her pocketbook, "but I've got his address. Willie wrote it down for me. I guess—Willie says it's an awful hard place to find, but I guess you won't have any trouble." She gave Sergeant O'Reilley a smile that bespoke more plainly than words the pride she felt in his profession.

"I—I thought if you went tonight—you know this is the day of the big 'Home Coming' parade for the soldier boys. I thought——"

"So it is," Sergeant O'Reilley interrupted as he scanned the paper she had given him. The address showed that the man lived in a very

thinly populated part of the town—on the outskirts.

"I suppose it wouldn't be possible—your boy couldn't come along with me tonight, could he? He might help to identify the man. In a case like this you know, madam, you have to be careful——"

"Oh, no, sir, he couldn't do that," there was a trace of apology mingled with the terror in her voice. "He couldn't do that. Willie has to work tonight."

"Of course I wouldn't insist," O'Reilley sought to disarm her of all fear as he advanced to open the door for her. "It's been very good of you to bring us this information, madam. It's the duty of every one to uphold the law."

"I'd hate to think I was the cause of having anybody arrested," she paused half-way to the door. "But I—I'm afraid about Willie, and if he's stolen all those things Willie says he has in his safe——"

"We'll investigate that safe, madam," Sergeant O'Reilley assured her. "And you needn't worry about your son. He'll be all right. I just thought if he could come along tonight——"

"No! No! He couldn't possibly," again that terror in her voice. "He—the man—might shoot him." There was a peculiar light in her eyes as she looked up at the Sergeant.

"If—if you think it would do any good, sir, I—I could go along."

"You?" interrupted O'Reilley.

"Yes," she replied, and he commended the mother instinct ever ready to sacrifice for her own. "You see, I've seen the man, and I—I could identify him as well as Willie. His is the kind of face you never forget once you've seen it."

"Are you sure you'd know him?" O'Reilley asked. "And—and you wouldn't be afraid?" he tested.

"Oh, yes, I'd know him all right," she answered, ignoring his latter question. "I could never forget how he looked when we passed him that time, me and Willie. When he saw Willie his hand went to his hip, but when he saw that I was with him, he removed his hand and passed on. It's that kind of thing that's getting on Willie's nerves, sir." She stopped speaking, but not before Sergeant O'Reilley could detect the quiver in her voice.

"And you—you'd come along?"

She hesitated a minute, then raised her head till her eyes looked straight into his.

"Yes. I'll come!" she replied. "For my child—for——"

"Shall I come for you, madam?" O'Reilley asked, "or shall——"

"No! No! That wouldn't do," she interposed. "I—I'll meet you there."

"I'll be waiting for you at the corner nearest this address," he indicated the paper she had given him, "at, say ten o'clock?" he suggested.

"At ten o'clock," she replied.

"Thank you, madam," Sergeant O'Reilley stood aside for her to make her exit. "And if we pull this trick——"

But she did not hear. She was hurrying down the hall as fast as her feet could carry her.

Sergeant O'Reilley left the office a few minutes later. He had wanted to see the "Home Coming" parade, but he would have to pass it up. If he was to pull this stunt without enlisting the aid of other officers he'd have to spend the afternoon reconnoitering a little around a certain address. As he walked out of the office and pulled the door behind him, his hopes began a decided ascent. He wouldn't see the Chief this afternoon. He'd wait until tomorrow, and in the meantime if he should have rounded up this other crook, unaided——

Yes, O'Reilley considered, "Captain" O'Reilley sounded much better than Sergeant O'Reilley. Much!

Sergeant O'Reilley struck a match and looked at his watch. It was five minutes of ten. And the woman had not shown up. He wondered if she was going to throw him over. And in his heart he knew he couldn't blame her if she did. Certainly the shadows that lurked around the neighborhood were enough to intimidate any woman.

She had spoken quite truthfully when she had said that the house was in an isolated community on the outskirts of the town. It was more than on the outskirts; it was on the frayed edges. It was one of those deserted spots that you find frequently around any large city—one of those semi-inhabited communities which suggest that the city had once decided to extend itself, and then had grown faint-hearted and had given it up as as bad job.

The nearest street light was four or five blocks away. Sidewalks which had once been graded but had been left uncurbed had become so badly washed as to be almost one with the ruggedly furrowed red clay streets.

Here and there a vacant frame house reared itself in shadowy blackness amidst the silhouetted trees and bushes. From these houses the blinds hung loose, steps were rotting away and doors and shingles were seceding. And on each of them was a faded "For Rent" sign. On all of them, that is, except the one bearing the address that Sergeant O'Reilley had in his pocket. A careful investigation had shown him that there was nobody at home at this house. Not a light burned there. Save for the absence of the "For Rent" sign it looked little different from the other houses.

Sergeant O'Reilley glanced again at his watch. It was very nearly ten. He wondered if she could have come and gone before he got there. Maybe——

"Oh!"

It was hardly more than a whisper. But it caused O'Reilley to turn. As his eyes lighted on

the form of the woman who had visited him in the Chief's office his face brightened. He couldn't distinguish her features there in the shadows. He barely could make out her form as she approached.

"I—I didn't come earlier because I—I didn't want to get here ahead of you," she apologized when she stood near him.

"But you did come!" he commended her. "That's the important thing. You weren't afraid——"

"Oh, I was afraid," she interrupted. "I started out to come. It took a lot of courage. Only for my boy——"

She spoke so slowly, so hesitatingly, so—so apprehensively that Sergeant O'Reilley upbraided himself for enlisting her services. But there could be no danger to her. And——

"Has—have you seen anything?" she asked in the same uncertain voice.

"Not a thing," he replied. "I've been here——"

"S-h-hhh!"

He stepped farther back into the shadows, pushing her along ahead of him. An automobile rounded the corner and came to a stop before the house bearing the number she had given him. The rasping sound of it as it passed them, and the jerky grating way in which it came to a stop proclaimed it a taxi, and of no recent vintage.

Peering through the darkness they could barely make out the figure of a man as he stepped from the car and stood for a minute on the curb. Then as the taxi wheezed into action the man walked hastily up the steps.

Sergeant O'Reilley waited until he had seen a light turned on inside the house before he came forth from his hiding place.

"We'll get that bird!" he proclaimed, and started stealthily down the street, the woman at his heels. Noiselessly he crept over the yard, which was covered with grass and weeds. He approached a window at the side of the house. Sergeant O'Reilley knew that the shade would be up, just a little. His afternoon's investigation had assured that. Hardly realizing what he was doing he caught hold of the woman's sleeve and pulled her after him toward the window.

It was necessary for him to stoop considerably to adjust his eye to that crack of light which shone beneath the window. But once he had his eye there——

Unconsciously he put his hand over the mouth of the woman. He was afraid she would make some noise, afraid of the effect that scene inside might produce. But she did not move. She stooped silently there beside him, and did not speak, even when he breathed the question:

"That him?"

She merely nodded. Her eyes were glued to the window. With every nerve strained she was watching the man who stood inside that room removing the bejeweled and sparkling loot from his pocket. They watched him as he stepped over and opened the safe in the wall. O'Reilley noted that it took some time to work the combination and judged that it must be a most intricate one.

From the safe they saw him pull a drawer. He dipped his hand into the drawer and brought it forth laden with rare jewels. Gloatingly he let the expensive baubles filter through his fingers. Sergeant O'Reilley and the woman watching with him caught all the glints of the rainbow, wrought in most costly setting.

The things he had removed from his pockets he added to the contents of the drawer. Then with a sinister smile he shut the door and turned the lock.

O'Reilley arose from his crouching position and started toward the front door. He had seen enough to make him sure of going ahead. The woman at his side—he had almost forgotten her until he felt her presence as he raised a finger to ring the bell.

He caught her hand. He thought the fingers trembled. Again he chided himself for having drawn her into this.

"If you're afraid—I don't think I'd go in if I were you," he told her. Now that she had identified the man.

But she pressed closer to him.

"I—I'm afraid," she whispered. He hoped she wasn't going to faint.

He rang the bell a second time. It was several minutes before shuffling footsteps were heard inside. When the door was opened it was the merest crack. The man, in house slippers and with a bath robe drawn tight around him, peered through the opening.

"What y' want?" He rubbed his eyes to indicate that he had been awakened from a sound sleep.

"I want to come in!" blurted Sergeant O'Reilley. "I've got business with you!"

"Well, you don't come in!" the man grunted, and endeavored to close the door. But Sergeant O'Reilley had his foot in the crack. "I don't transact business at this time o' night."

"This business," O'Reilley replied, "you're going to transact right now!" And he widened the crack by twisting his foot. He pulled back the lapel of his coat and the dim light from the hall fell on his badge.

"And if that isn't enough——" O'Reilley pulled a pistol from his pocket and backed the man into the hall and then into the room where they had seen him standing. He did not notice whether the woman was following. His attention was all for this man who had defied him.

The light in the room had been turned off.

"Turn on that light!" he commanded. The man obeyed. He was not prepared for the next command, however.

"Open that safe!"

"What—what safe?" he stammered.

O'Reilley indicated the contraption on the wall.

"There!" he ordered.

"I—I can't—I can't open it," the man fumbled. "It's not mine——"

"Open it!" O'Reilley repeated his command, and leveled his pistol meticulously. Slowly the man approached the safe, and worked the combination. With an oath he flung the door open, and pulled out the drawer.

"There!" he said. "It's open. Now what?"

"Now you come with me. And you bring that stuff along. That's what!"

The eyes of Sergeant O'Reilley shifted from the face of the man to the sparkle within that drawer. He caught his breath at the wealth displayed, and for just the merest fraction of a second his trigger finger went limp. But in the merest fraction of a second——

"Like hell I do!" the man exploded, and before O'Reilley realized what had happened the pistol had been knocked from his hand.

He lunged for it. The man brought his fist up under his chin, and as O'Reilley tottered, he reached back with his foot and kicked the pistol across the room. It landed just in front of the window.

O'Reilley steadied himself and started toward it. But the other man was ahead of him. He sprawled across the floor, and in another minute he would have had his hand over the gun. Sergeant O'Reilley grabbed his feet and with a swift movement pulled the body back until the outstretched hand was a good foot and a half from its objective. Then he fell upon him.

The struggle which followed lasted several minutes, and O'Reilley had exerted quite a bit of his six feet of strength before the man was weakened. When he continued to struggle Sergeant O'Reilley reached to his belt and started to draw the billie.

"I—I guess the jig's up. I'll be good!" the man surrendered.

"I'll say you will!" the Sergeant replied, as he drew forth a pair of handcuffs and adjusted them around the limp wrists.

"I've got you now—you——"

"Yes! You've got me all right!" the man replied. Even in his weakened condition he laughed, exultantly. "You've got me, but—you've let her get away with the evidence!"

"Let who——"

O'Reilley turned and looked at the safe. It was empty! Not a sparkle remained!

"Let who—get away?" he asked feebly.

"Why, 'Sleight-o'-Hand Annie,'" the man replied, "the woman who followed you in! She couldn't have got in that safe in a thousand years without your aid!"

Sergeant O'Reilley groaned. Slowly understanding dawned. Then he laughed. But it was not an expression of mirth. It was a laugh of irony undiluted! With understanding there floated across his mind an old truism which said something about "Opportunity knocks," and another which had to do with "honor among thieves!"

SPIRITUALISM ON THE AMAZON

THE original exponents of spiritualism were found among the tribes in the region around the head waters of the Amazon by early Spanish explorers, and savage seances are still held there with exactly the same rites as those witnessed by the Europeans so long ago.

The mediums do not employ rappings, table tipping or the dark cabinet to call up the dead, but their ceremonies are weird and spectacular in the extreme. When a member of the tribe desires to talk with a deceased relative or friend he visits the medium and states his wish, at the same time making advance payment in the form of feathers, fruit and various jungle delicacies. The medium requests him to return at a certain hour the next night with as many guests as he cares to invite in honor of the departed spirit.

As soon as the man goes away the medium builds a fire of scented woods, over which he steeps a decoction of green herbs Many of these herbs are deadly poison, but are so skilfully mixed in measured quantities that one acts as an antidote to the other.

At the appointed time the spiritualist and his invited guests appear and seat themselves in a circle around the fire, but at a respectful distance from it. Absolute silence reigns save for the regular tap of a drum sounded at intervals by a man stationed in the shadows beyond the fire.

The medium appears bearing aloft a cocoanut shell filled with the brew of herbs. He scatters the glowing fire to form a ring and steps into the middle of it, first laying fragrant green sticks on the live coals. Soon clouds of thick smoke rise and envelop him, the men around the fire break into a wild incantation, the drum is furiously beaten, and in the midst of the uproar the medium drinks the poison and casts the empty cocoanut shell among the spectators. Immediately the chant ceases, the drum is silent, and every eye is fixed on the medium, dimly visible through the smoke.

The drug takes effect at once, his eyes roll, his mouth twitches, his body writhes, and unintelligible cries issue from his lips. These cries are believed to be the voice of the departed. The man who has thus caused the dead to be summoned proceeds to ask questions of the spirit. The spirits are consulted about everything that happens in the village, tribal or family quarrels, contemplated journeys, stolen property, even the planting of crops, and the frenzied and guttural utterances of the suffering medium groveling on the ground in the throes of pain are interpreted by the eager listeners as replies. When the medium finally succumbs to exhaustion and lies motionless in the embers of the sacred fire the assemblage disperses.

A Post-Adolescent Elopement

By SALLIE F. TOLER

MRS. JEPTHA QUILTER had gone to the door several times and looked out in a dissatisfied way at two people, a man and a woman, talking across the front fence. The two people were her husband's mother and Mr. Matthew Haydon, a neighbor, who was a widower of sixty.

Mrs. Jeptha scowled in disgust as she watched her mother-in-law smile, cast her eyes modestly down, then stoop to break a nasturtium, which she proffered to the elderly gentleman with a gesture truly youthful.

"For the land's sake, Jeptha," said the younger Mrs. Quilter to her husband, who sat in the back door, resting after his forenoon's work on the cultivator, "I wish you'd just come here and look at your mother. I declare I'm plum ashamed to see such carryin' on. A woman o' her age."

"What are ye a-watchin' 'em for, then?" inquired Jeptha, with reason.

"Jeptha Quilter, if you ain't got any more spunk nor pride than to see your mother standin' out in the front yard, where everybody can see her flirtin' and sparkin' with old Mr. Haydon, you ought to be ashamed."

"Well, what can I do? You don't expect me to go out and order mother in, and order old man Haydon off, a man I've knowed all my life, back in Illinoy?"

"I want to know, Jeptha Quilter, if you are willin' to let your mother marry agin, and like as not turn us out of this place, bag and baggage?"

"I dunno as I've got the lettin'. Mother is old enough to be her own boss; of course, I'd ruther she wouldn't marry, an' I don't believe she's got any notion of it."

"You're just as blind as—as—well, as a man. I reckon I know when a woman's got marry in her head. This coquettin' 's been goin' on fer two months, an' I say your mother is as full of airs and prinkin' as a sixteen-year-old girl. It's just plum disgustin' and ought to be stopped."

"How are ye goin' to stop it? Both of 'em are of age."

"You give me leave, and I lay I'll stop it, if you'll promise not to say a word, whatever I do."

"Well, I dunno," began Jeptha, doubtfully. "I won't have mother harried."

"I'll not do a thing to harry her; you leave it to me, and I'll just put a flea in old man Haydon's ear."

Outside, Mrs. Mary Quilter stood looking across the fence and smiling in the face of her elderly admirer, who was praising her nasturtiums, and expressing an intense interest in the way they clambered up the palings.

"My 'sturtions never would do that a-way, nothing I could do for 'em. They jest persist in layin' down like as if they hadn't the heart to hold their heads up in this Kansas wind; but mebbe it's on account o' him that planted 'em."

"Now, Mr. Haydon, do you mean to say that you ain't got heart enough to hold your head up?"

"You know mighty well what 'ud put sperit enough in me for anything," said the man, significantly.

Mrs. Quilter blushed like a girl. Her peachy cheek had yet the color if not the contour of youth, and her hair, which shone as she stood bareheaded in the sun, had not a gray thread. Yet she was fifty-two.

"I know," she said, softly, "but it does seem foolish for two old people like us to be talkin' about marryin'; besides, I know Jeptha and his wife would be mortal opposed to anything of the kind. Though I will say, that a person who has lost her companion is a lonesome person, I don't care how many child'en she's got."

"That's jest it. The heart don't never grow old—you know that. It may not, so to speak, bound so tumultuous as when we's younger, but it keeps up a steady throbbin that is comfortabler in the long run. An' what's our chillen got to do with it? They are grown an' married an' took up with the cares of their own families, an' us two jest left out in the cold, so to speak."

"I don't believe I could ever stand the fuss and disagreeableness that Jeptha's wife would make for me if I was to mention such a thing. Maria's a good woman, but tryin' at times. I never was no hand to jaw back, nor hold my own, even."

"I tell you what let's do—let's elope. By gum, that's the very idee! We'll get married, an' not say a word until it's done, then they can't help theirselves."

"Mr. Haydon, I'm plum ashamed of ye!"

The old man, with a chuckle of delight, drew nearer the fence, and sunk the remainder of his pleading to a whisper, which was intended for the widow's ears alone.

When Mrs. Mary Quilter went into the house, she carried a handful of crisp nasturtium leaves with a few of the brilliant blooms, and placed them with artistic carelessness about a plate of cabbage salad.

Mrs. Jeptha looked on with a snort.

"Humph! Bokays always seem to me out o' place with vittles."

Then wishing to appear in a pleasant humor, she added:

"I s'pose, though, 'sturtiums might be called vittles, they're good to taste."

As they sat at dinner, she said blandly:

"Mother Quilter, me and Jeptha's been a-talkin' it over, an' we've concluded that you ought to go on a visit to your sister in Illinoy. She's been a-wantin' you to come for ever so long, an' Jeptha says he's made the price of your trip over and above in that corn trade with the elevator last week, an' you can have it if you want to go; though I won't say but I need some new things myself. Still——"

"Why, Maria," began Jeptha, but a kick under the table made him finish his protest in a cough, and strangle over his soup.

Mrs. Mary had flashed a startled look at her daughter-in-law, but she said quietly:

"Why, yes; I would like to go, but I didn't 'low I ought to spend the money just now, though I s'pose some of it might be comin' to me as rent from the place."

"Well, as to rent," retorted Mrs. Jeptha sharply, "the Lord knows it ain't worth much, an' countin' board an' everything. But I know you want to go, an' now would be a good time."

The younger woman was surprised at her mother-in-law's ready consent; she had expected some slight opposition.

"I'll start Wednesday on the noon train, Maria."

"Why don't you go on the night train, then you won't have to lay over in Kansas City?"

"No," answered Mrs. Quilter, with an unusual obstinacy, "I'd ruther go in the afternoon."

The following day Mrs. Jeptha found it convenient to be loitering at the nasturtium beds as Matthew Haydon strolled by, and after a few commonplaces, she remarked carelessly:

"I s'pose you knew Mother Quilter is goin' back to Illinoy on a visit? Ye didn't? Now, I s'posed she had told you. Well, I s'pose she's kind o' bashful. I tell her t'ain't nothin', but you see folks have plegged her so much about you, that she's got plum disgusted, an' says she'll put a stop to it. She 'lows it makes her ashamed to have folks makin' remarks about her at her age. Yes, she is goin' to start to-morrow afternoon. 'Tis redic'lous, ain't it, that some folks is such busybodies, that old friends an' neighbors can't pass a friendly word without anything bein' thought of it? This town just beats all the place I ever see for gossip. An' Mother Quilter says she wouldn't marry the best man et ever lived, lessen every hair of his head was strung with gold, an' you know yourn ain't, Mr. Haydon. Though I will say that Mother Quilter is ruther graspin' to talk that a-way."

Wednesday afternoon Jeptha Quilter and his wife saw their mother safely off on the train. When the noon passenger stopped at the first station out, Matthew Haydon, wearing a bran new suit and a cerulean necktie, and carrying a new valise, got on board. His freshly shaven face shone with scented soap and delight.

"If that wasn't done the slickest I ever seen,' he said, as he sat down by Mrs. Quilter and took her hand boldly in his. "They act'illy helped us off, and paid the bride's fare, by gum," he chuckled. "Now we got two hours to wait at Kansas City, we'll go up-town, get the license an' get married there, an' go on to Illinoy an' pay your sister a visit for our weddin' tower."

All went well with the elderly Lochinvar, and when the Chicago & Alton pulled out of Kansas City that night, it carried Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Haydon, bound as tightly in the bonds of matrimony as the State of Missouri could tie them.

Mr. Haydon possessed as much inquisitive curiosity as a woman; and when, about eleven o'clock, the train came to a stop and he heard threatening voices and then a pistol shot or two, he could not refrain trying to find out what it was all about.

The matter really was, that the train had been held up by train robbers in one of those historic "cuts." famous for many similar adventures. When Haydon, clad only in his shirt and trousers, stepped off on the ground, some one promptly smote him over the head, and laid him senseless on the damp earth.

The train was miles away, and the robbers dispersed with their booty, when he recovered consciousness. Bitterly he lamented his curiosity, as he started out to find some place of shelter. About a mile distant he saw a light twinkling through the darkness, and made his way in that direction the best he was able. It proved to be the small railway station of Blue Creek, and the night operator, who had heard nothing of the robbery and hold-up, was rather startled when an elderly party, wearing neither shoes nor hat, burst in upon him at such a late hour. Mr. Haydon's gray hair stood up with mud and fright; a large bump, not down in the phenological chart, glistened over his left eye.

"Who in Sam Hill——" began the telegraph operator.

Now an old man is more sensitive to ridicule, especially concerning matters of the heart, than a young man; so that when Mr. Haydon was questioned, instead of telling the straight truth, he tried to hide the fact that his unlucky curiosity had separated him from his bride. He said:

"I don't know how in the world it happened, unless I jest walked in my sleep, and I hain't done sech a thing sence I was a boy 's I know of. But I was a passenger on that Chicago & Alton train, and didn't know I was out of it until a half-hour ago when I come to, a-settin' by the side of the track an' my head a-feelin' fit to bust, an' I knowed I was left, and see your light. Say, mister, ain't there some way to telegraft to that train an' stop it? I've got a—a—friend on board who will feel powerful oneasy."

"Oh, that will be easy enough! We can send a telegram to Slater—the passenger reaches there at twelve-thirty—and you can have your friend wait for you, or at least satisfy his mind.

What's your friend's name?" he asked, turning to prepare a blank.

Alas! our hero was past that adolescent period of versatility in the art of equivocation. The old man had until now lived a life as straight as a string, and he found the tangled web of the prevaricator more complicated than he would have believed. He did not wish to give the name of his wife, nor did he wish to run the risk in any way of the accident being found out at all by his friends at home. He did the clumsiest thing that he could have done. He went on lying in the inexpert way he had begun.

"As shore as you live, I'm that dazed I can't remember our names," he said.

"What!" exclaimed the night operator, in growing suspicion. "How in Halifax am I to send a telegram, unless I know who to send it to?"

"Can't you jest telegraft to the conductor, 'the lost is found,' er something of that kind? He'll know it means me."

The operator looked at his visitor a few minutes with well-defined suspicion in his glance, then carefully edging his way back of the little counter to his instrument, he nervously ticked off:

"Station Agent at M——. Send somebody down here at once. Crazy man off of No. 4."

The answer came back at once:

"Ed and Jerry on the yard engine in ten minutes."

M—— was six miles away.

"Now," said the operator, soothingly, "can't you remember your friend's name?" He would endeavor at least to keep the suspected lunatic's mind occupied.

"No, I can't," said Mr. Haydon, snappishly. "But jest send the telegraft, will ye? I'll pay the expense. No, I can't either, for I've left my pocket-book—Lord, Lord, how long will it take? Send it anyhow; I tell ye I'm good for a hundred times the amount," and he glared so wildly that the operator sent this message to the agent at Slater:

"Tell conductor on No. 4 that the man lost off the train is here and inclined to be unmanageable. Have sent to M—— for help to secure him."

"There, now," he said again in a pacifying tone, "just sit down and keep calm a few moments, until we get an answer," for he heard the whistle of the engine from M——.

The engine pulled up to the platform, and three men got off. "Jerry" was a big Irishman who walked cautiously up to the supposed lunatic.

"Now thin, will ye go quietly wid us, or must we use foorce?"

By this time the unlucky bridegroom's tribulations had indeed made him slightly hysterical; and supposing the men were trying to joke with him, he made a lunge at the grinning Jerry that would have done credit to a youthful pugilist.

Jerry and the two others caught him by the arms and legs, and the more the old man tried to explain, the more his ravings were taken as evidence of his dangerous insanity. He made a valiant struggle, all things considered, but he was finally thrown in the baggage room and the key turned.

"Begorra, but he's a stiff tussler fer an old 'un!" said Jerry, puffing with the exercise; "but it's the madness that makes 'em strong."

As may be supposed, the newly-made Mrs. Matthew Haydon was almost distracted when the conductor communicated the contents of the telegram to her. She had missed her lord, but had modestly refrained from inquiring about him, until his prolonged absence began to make her anxious. But, under the advice of the conductor, she boarded the return passenger, which passed them at Slater, and set out for Blue Creek.

It will be kinder to pass over the reunion and explanations which were necessary at that place.

As Jeptha Quilter was down on his knees kindling the kitchen fire the next morning at five o'clock, Mrs. and Mr. Matthew Haydon presented themselves at the door. Jeptha's mother wore a chastened yet determined look that he had never seen there before.

"Yes, it's me—me and Mr. Haydon, and we're married, an' got the certificate to prove it. I've b'en through a heap sense I left here day before yesterday, Jeptha, an' I tell you right now that I ain't in any humor to take any cuttin' up about it. No fussin' ain't goin' to unmarry us, an' that might as well be understood first as last! An' another thing—you an' Maria can jes' as well make up your minds to rent the eighty acres across the creek, an' move over there right away, 'cause two famblies never did do well in the same house, an' it's nachul that I should want my own house now. There needn't be no hard feelin's, as t'other eighty has got a good house on it. I jest had 'bout enough worryin' these two days to las' me the rest o' my life."

VELOCITY OF LIGHT

PHYSICISTS never tire of efforts to increase the accuracy of their knowledge of the fundamental facts of science. A redetermination of the velocity of light by the Fizeau toothed wheel method was made at Nice. These experiments were remarkable on account of the great distance over which the beam of light employed was transmitted. Previously such a beam had been caused to travel about fifteen miles, but on this occasion the reflecting mirror was so placed that the total distance traversed by the beam, going and returning, was fifty-seven miles. The mean of 1,109 observations gave for the velocity of light 186,225 1-2 miles a second.

The Queer Adventure Of Mr. Tompkins

By HENRY E. DIXSY

WHEN Evangelist Moody asked those in the audience who would promise to refrain from reading the Sunday newspaper to hold up their right hands, Tompkins sprang to his feet and held up both hands. Since then he has been quite active in endeavoring to promote an organized effort to start an anti-Sunday paper league. He was for many years, however, an inveterate reader of Sunday newspapers, declaring they were the only papers he got a chance to read, even feeling he was justified in staying away from church to peruse them. This is how his reformation came about:

Tompkins lived in one of the most quiet and respectable streets in up-town New York. He and his family had just returned from a trip to California. On a very cold Sunday morning in December, when the thermometer indicated only a few degrees above zero, he was awakened at about 7:30 o'clock by the cries of a newsboy:

"Extry! Extry! All about de big fire! Fourteen people burned to death! Extry!"

Curiosity was Tompkins' chief weakness. As he lay buried in the pillows, and almost smothered under warm blankets, he began to wonder where the fire had occurred, and who were the victims. Perhaps the fire had consumed the business house in Greenwich street in which he was interested financially! It might have been the janitor and his family who were consumed in the flames! A few reflections such as these soon roused him from his somnolent state into a condition of alertness and anxiety. He longed for his Sunday paper. He knew it was lying on the front stoop awaiting the servant. It occurred to him to ring the bell and tell Bridget to get the paper. Then, with an inward groan, he reflected that Bridget had gone away the night before, and would not return until ten o'clock. While these thoughts were passing through Tompkins' mind his wife slumbered peaceful as a cherub by his side.

Tompkins turned over and tried to compose himself to sleep, but in vain. The cry of the newsboy still sounded like an alarm bell in his ears. His curiosity was becoming insupportable. He threw back the bedclothes and stepped softly out upon the floor.

Tompkins was fully six feet tall in his bare feet. He was also very thin. His night shirt reached only half way between his knees and his feet. There was, therefore, a large portion of long, thin shinbone exposed. He crossed the floor on tiptoe, gently lifted the sash and threw open the blinds. Yes, there upon the stoop lay the longed-for paper, the keen wind gently stirring its pages. He would have given a dollar to have had it in his hands.

He looked up and down the street in search of a boy to whom he could throw down the key to the front door, but no living creature was in sight. He alluded to his luck in language which was both explicit and inelegant, and he closed the window softly and got back into bed, while his teeth chattered like castanets.

When the blood had begun to course through his veins in a genial manner again, and the gooseflesh on his arms had gone away, it occurred to Tompkins that he could slip down to the front door, dart upon the paper like a fishhawk, cuddle down beside his slumbering partner, read all about the fire and see if there had been any more Western bank failures.

Tompkins was a man of action. He was also a sprinter. He calculated that he could do the job in less than a minute. There would not be time enough for him to get chilled. Without stopping to put an overcoat over his shoulders, he darted down the three flights of stairs. As he passed the hall mirror he noted his gruesome appearance, his hideous shins and the enormous size of his feet. Remembering he was alone, however, he plucked up his courage, opened the door on a crack and peeped out. Yes, there was the paper, but it lay nearly six feet from the door. He looked up and down the street. It was as deserted as a Presbyterian church on Monday morning.

Tompkins hesitated, and while he lingered, the keen December wind swept in the door and caressed his gaunt shins with icy breath. Then his courage rose, as he saw all the blinds but one in the houses opposite were closed. He could put one foot out, reach forward, make a quick snatch, and jump back into the house. The razor-like breeze hastened his determination to act quickly. He threw the door back with a jerk, stepped gingerly out upon the stone porch, grabbed the paper, lost his balance and slid to the sidewalk. While still sprawling upon the cold sidewalk, Tompkins heard a slam behind him, and realized that the door had closed. The door had a spring lock and catch. He had locked himself out. The horror of his situation caused the perspiration to break out upon him in spite of the intense cold.

The houses in the block were exactly alike. In the excitement and terror of the moment, Tompkins darted up the stoop of the house adjoining his own. He placed his shaking finger upon the electric button and heard the bell with startling distinctness. Shivers were playing tag up and

down his spine, while the breeze toyed with the tail of his nightshirt. Hearing no indication of a reply to his frenzied signal, Tompkns began to pound upon the door with both fists in a vain effort to awaken his wife, while warm curses slid from his mouth like links of sausage. By this time his lips were blue and he was shaking like a fever-and-ague patient.

To add to his misery he heard a window rising across the street. Looking over his shoulder he saw an elderly gentleman training an opera-glass upon him. Then he heard a mellow chuckle, as the spectator shouted:

"Trying the Kneipp cure, eh? Break in the door!"

The shouts of the elderly man, together with the noise made by Tompkins, awoke everybody in the block except his wife, and a gale of laughter swept down the street. Tompkins redoubled his efforts upon the door, but without the desired effect. His misery nearly reached its height when he saw three young ladies turn the corner. Their attention was quickly attracted to the gaunt figure in white, and they sidled toward the outer edge of the sidewalk shaking with laughter. Scarcely had they disappeared when an old lady, carrying an umbrella, appeared upon the scene.

"Arrah, poor man," said she, sympathetically, "and are ye locked out? Faith, it's mighty little clothes ye has on! Here, take this umbrella and hide yerself."

"T-t-t-thank you, m-m-m-adam," said Tompkins with chattering teeth, as he opened the umbrella, and sitting down upon the door sill with his shirt-tail tucked under him, he placed the umbrella before him, which partially concealed his body from the curious on-lookers. The sympathetic old lady was still standing on the sidewalk with a broad grin on her face, when she was joined by a small boy. He began shouting at the top of his lungs:

"Hey, Jimmy! Hurry! Come and see de guy wid no close on! Soy, razor-shins, wos ye goin' in swimmin'? Why don't ye put on yer pants? Ain't you a bute?"

A crowd of small boys came running to the scene and in less than a minute Tompkins was surrounded by a yelling mob, who amused themselves by pelting him with snowballs. The commotion attracted the attention of a policeman on the nearest avenue. He came running down the street. Tearing the umbrella out of Tompkins' shaking hands, he asked sternly:

"What are you doing here? Are you crazy?"

"N-n-n-no," replied the almost paralyzed sufferer. "I'm locked out!"

"Well, you'll soon be locked up," says the cop.

"I can't wake my wife up," explained Tompkins.

"Faith, it's you that nades wakin' up. What's yer name?"

"Theophilus Tompkins."

"An' where's ther pants av yer?"

"In my bedroom."

"Have yez been dhrinkin'?"

"I would if I knew where to get it."

"Then yer must have been smokin' hop."

"I never——"

"Shut up! I know ther signs!"

Tompkins snapped his teeth together.

"You're either drunk or crazy," said the officer; "this house has not been occupied for six months! Come along! You're arrested for indecent exposure. Here, put on this coat."

By this time Tompkins was helpless from cold and mortification. He drew on the policeman's overcoat, and was escorted to the station-house, which, fortunately for Tompkins, was only a block away. The pair were followed by a hooting mob of a hundred people.

When the station-house was reached, it required half an hour's warming before Tompkins could talk.

"What's the charge?" asks the sergeant.

"Shimmy dance," says the cop.

"In the cold?" asks the sergeant.

"In his shirt-tail," says the cop.

"Give the evidence," says the sergeant.

"He was poundin' ther dure wid his fists when I came along, an' I'd a-fanned him wid me shtick, but the divil let a grunt, an' ses he lives there."

"What have you to say for yourself?" asks the sergeant of the prisoner.

Then Tompkins told his tale, and as several of his neighbors identified him, he was finally released and they loaned him an overcoat to wear home.

Two days afterward, as he lay upon the lounge swathed in bandages and hoarse as a crow, his wife said:

"Dearest, do you know where that fire occurred which caused you all the pain and annoyance?"

"No, Maria. Where was it?" asked Tompkins.

"Why, it was in Europe somewhere, Berlin, if I'm not mistaken. And it wasn't men and women who were burned, 'twas horses."

MOSLEM IDEA OF BEAUTY

AN educated Arab at present in London explained the Moslem idea of female beauty. He said:

"Among us we say that the perfect woman must possess four attributes that are black, viz., hair, eyebrows, eyelashes and pupils; four that are white—skin, hands, teeth and the white of the eye; four that are red—cheeks, lips, tongue and gums; four that are long—back, arms, fingers and legs: four that are round—head, throat, wrists and elbows; four that are small—eyebrows, nose, lips and fingers.

"There you have the female form divine as Allah fashioned it."

The Game At The Black Wolf

By M. QUAD

THIS much we at Abiline knew about Jim Crosby—that he was a gambler, a mine-sharper, a swindler and a man with no feeling of mercy in his heart. He had been warned out of three or four different towns by vigilance committees, and twice his friends had rescued him when he had a rope about his neck.

And we knew of Joe Foy—that his friends had set him up in a modest way on a cattle-ranch, and that his sister Kate had charge of his household matters. Joe was easy-going, unsuspecting and good-natured. He liked whisky and gambling and his sister Kate. Joe hadn't an enemy until he discovered that Crosby was trying to get into the good graces of his sister. Kate didn't like the man and froze him out. When he thought to reach her through the brother, Joe put his hand on the man's shoulder and kindly but firmly said:

"It's no use, Jim. You are good enough as men go out here, but that isn't good enough for Kate. It will be better if you keep away from the ranch."

Crosby laughed and seemed to take it all in good part, but from that hour he swore to live to humble the girl and be revenged on Joe.

The Black Wolf saloon of Abiline was a tough place. Crosby made it his headquarters, and Joe Foy often dropped in there. One day he was caught when feeling blue, and just after a big drink of whisky had begun to carry him the other way. Crosby suggested a game of cards, and two of his chums helped him out, and that's the way Joe was taken into the game. He never had much luck at poker, but this afternoon he won until the two cappers had to drop out. This left Joe and Jim alone, and though the frequenters of the Black Wolf had little pity for anybody, they sighed and shook their heads as they marked the merciless eyes and firm-set jaw of the professional gambler.

"Look here, Joe," said he with one of those smiles which always meant murder, "this game may become red-hot, and as I haven't the best temper in the world when I'm losing at cards, here goes my gun behind the bar."

What could Joe Foy do but follow his example? The twenty men in the place winked at each other, but Joe saw nothing. He was drinking every few minutes and was anxious to win or lose—odds were the difference which. The game between the two men began at two o'clock in the afternoon. By four Joe had won six hundred dollars in cash from Jim. Then Jim staked his horse against fifty dollars and won,

As I told you, Crosby was a sharper and knew all the tricks of the business, whilst Joe Foy played a square game. At ten o'clock in the evening, after eight hours of steady play, Joe Foy was penniless. Money, watch, horse, gun, 300 head of cattle and the ranch were gone.

"Well, Jim, luck is down on me, as usual, and I've nothing left for another stake," Joe said.

"Yes, it's queer how luck runs," mused Jim. "One more stake and you might win everything back."

"Well, what shall I stake?"

The gambler looked at him for a long minute, as if wondering whether he had reached the proper mood, and finally bent across the table and uttered a few whispers. Joe Foy grew red, but presently he nodded and picked up his cards.

"It's sunthin' about his sister," growled one of the men interested. "Bein' as Jim has got Joe's last dollar he's axin' consent to make the gal his wife."

It was a good guess. The money was pushed across the table and the game resumed. By eleven o'clock Joe had won five hundred dollars. That is, the gambler had permitted him to win it. At midnight the boy had two hundred dollars left, and he bet it on a three-ace hand. Jim called him and laid down four kings. He got one of those kings by the boldest fraud, and several men detected it, but nothing was said. Joe was worse than broke now. He said:

"By the way, Jim, my gun has changed hands, but would you lend it to me for a minute?"

"Of course—of course," was the smiling reply.

Joe walked over to the bar, took the gun held out to him, and though a dozen men suspected his design, no one moved a finger to prevent. Crosby simply turned his head away so as not to see it—the corpse which fell to the floor as Joe's finger pulled the trigger. One heard a long-drawn "a-h-h-h!" from every man in the room, a slight shuffle of feet, and then a man hoarsely whispered:

"Good God! but thar is his sister!"

Perhaps some one had called at the ranch—perhaps she only suspected and had come in to look Joe up. As we turned to the door she stood there, just inside the room, a revolver in her hand and her eyes blazing.

Fifteen—twenty—thirty seconds passed, and then the girl advanced straight upon Crosby. At five feet away up came the pistol—there was a spout of flame—and the gambler fell back stone dead, shot through the brain. Then the girl turned and went out—slowly, quietly and without a word, and not a foot had moved when we heard the gallop of her horse outside.

The Meaning of Dreams

HOW TO READ CHARACTER

(Continued from No. 71.)

22. If the forehead juts out immediately at and over the eyebrows, running flat up to the hair, the gentleman or lady will be sullen, proud, insolent, imperious and treacherous; they will be impatient when contradicted, apt to give great abuse, and to strike if they think they can do it with advantage. They will also impose upon any person, never forgiving any injury, and by their misconduct make themselves many enemies.

23. If their temples are hollow, with the bones advancing towards the forehead on either side, so that the space between must be necessarily flat, with a small channel or indenture rising from the upper part of the nose to the hair, the gentleman or lady will be of a daring and intrepid temper, introducing themselves into matters wherein they have no business, desirous of passing for wits, and of a subtle and enterprising nature; greedy of praise, quick in quarrel, and of a wandering disposition, very lewd, and full of resentment when they feel their pride hurt. In short, they delight in mischief, riots, &c.

24. If the eyebrows are very hairy, and the hair long and curled, with several of the hairs starting out, the gentleman or lady is of a gloomy disposition, litigious, quarrelsome, although a coward; greedy after the affairs of the world, perpetually brooding over some melancholy subject, and not an agreeable companion. He will be diffident, penurious, and weak in his understanding; never addicted to any kind of learning. He will pretend much friendship, but will make his affected passion subservient to his pecuniary designs, and also given to drinking, &c., &c.

25. If a gentleman or lady has long eyebrows, with some long hairs, they will be of a fickle disposition, weak-minded, credulous, and vain, always seeking after novelties, and neglecting their own business; they will be talkative, pert, and disagreeable in company; very fond of contradiction, but will not bear disappointment patiently; and will also be much addicted to drinking, &c.

26. If the eyebrows are thick and even, that is, without any or few starting hairs, the gentleman or lady will be of an agreeable temper, sound understanding, and tolerable wit; moderately addicted to pleasure, fearful of giving offense, but intrepid and persevering in support of right; charitable and generous, sincere in their professions of friendship, and enjoy a good constitution.

27. If the eyebrow is small, thin of hair, and even, the gentleman or lady will be weak-minded, timorous, superficial, and not to be depended on; they will be desirous of knowledge, but will not have patience and assiduity enough to give it the necessary attention; but will not have spirit or perseverance enough to perform them, in that degree of excellence that is requisite to attract the notice of wise men. They will be of a delicate constitution, &c.

28. If the eyebrow is thick of hair towards the nose, and goes off suddenly very thin, ending in a point, the gentleman or lady will be surly, captious, jealous, fretful and easily provoked to rage; in their love they will be intemperate.

29. The eye that is large, full, prominent, and clear, denotes a gentleman or lady to be of an ingenious and candid disposition, void of deceit, and of an even, agreeable, and affable disposition; modest and bashful in love, though by no means an enemy to its gratification; firm, though not obstinate; of a good understanding, of an agreeable but not brilliant wit; but clear and just in argument, inclined to extravagance, and easily imposed upon.

30. The eye that is small but advanced in the head shows the gentleman or lady to be of a quick wit, sound constitution, lively genius, agreeable company and conversation, good morals, but rather inclined to jealousy, attentive to business, fond of frequently changing his place, punctual in fulfilling his engagements, warm in love, prosperous in his undertakings, and generally fortunate in most things.

31. The gentleman or lady whose eyes are sunk in the head, is of jealous, distrustful, malicious, and envious nature, deceitful in their words and actions, never to be depended upon; cunning in overreaching others, vain-glorious, and associates with lewd and bad company, &c.

32. The gentleman or lady who squints, or have their eyes turned awry, will be of a penurious disposition, but punctual in their dealings.

33. A black eye is lively, brisk, and penetrating, and proves the person who possesses it to be of a sprightly wit, lively conversation, not easily to be imposed upon, of a sound understanding, but if taken on a weak side may be led astray for a while.

34. A hazel eye shows the person to be of a subtle, piercing, and frolicsome disposition, rather inclined to be arch, and sometimes mischievous, but good-natured at the bottom. He will be strongly inclined to love, and not over delicate in the means of gratifying that propensity.

35. A blue eye shows the person to be of a meek and gentle temper, affable and good-natured, credulous, and incapable of violent attachments; ever modest, cool, and undisturbed by turbulent passions, of a strong memory, in constitution neither nobust nor delicate, subject to no violent impressions from the vicissitudes of life, whether good or bad.

(To be continued.)

Current News

ACTOR LEGISLATORS

Australia holds the record in the matter of actor legislators as in many other things. For years there sat simultaneously in the Melbourne parliament Mr. Morton King, an eminent tragedian, and Mr. George Coppin, a no less distinguished comedian, the "Australian Toole," as he was called. With himself in the title rôle, Mr. King organized a performance of "Hamlet," in which every male character was enacted by an M. P. It netted $5,000 for the Melbourne hospital.

FOUND CAN OF MONEY

A can containing $300 in gold was uprooted from the ground by a hog on the farm of Bud Ray, near Jones' Mill, in Henry County, Tenn. Mrs. Richard Collins, a neighbor of the Rays, has laid claim to the money. Mrs. Collins says her husband once owned the farm on which the money was found, and that she loaned him the amount contained in the can shortly before his death. After his death, she says, the money could not be found, although his books contained a record reading: "Three hundred dollars canned."

SAVES SOMNAMBULIST

When Beulah Freeman, sixteen years old, of Vandalia, Ill., awoke one night she was being lifted off the track by Dan Walsh, engineer of a Pennsylvania train.

She had left bed asleep and walked down an embankment to the railroad near her home. Walsh saw her on the track and stopped his train a few feet from the somnambulist.

"When I awoke," Miss Freeman says, "I was being carried to my home. When I realized how near I came to being run over I was scared. I feel the effects yet."

OLD NOTE FOUND

An unpaid note for 4 shekels in silver, bearing 40 per cent. annual interest for nearly 4,000 years, was recently found among the clay tablets at the University of Pennsylvania Museum by Dr. Leon Legrain. The note was given by a man named Bur-Mama to Il Einnutum in October, 1962 B. C., the "year in which King Rim-Sin occupied the town of Dur-Damigilisha."

There were four witnesses to the note. Instead of signatures, the witnesses placed their seals on the document and were not liable for payment unless it was shown they knew the character of Bur-Mama was bad when they swore it was good.

Although comparisons are difficult, Dr. Legrain said, a shekel of silver at the time the note was made was equal to about $100 at the present time.

BERNHARDT WRITES NOVEL

The "divine Sarah" proves her vitality and her versatility in her 75th year by adding the art of novel writing to her many accomplishments.

Her first long novel makes its appearance in serial form in the illustrated daily paper Excelsior. In "La Petite Idole," as the work is called, there are reproduced many characters who were living during the last half-century, people in the theatrical, diplomatic and social world. Mme. Sarah Bernhardt is now actress and stage manager, painter—her pictures have been praised at the Salon—sculptor and writer of memoirs, short stories and a modern novel.

A GEOLOGICAL FREAK

One of the most remarkable geological freaks in Mexico is a mountain situated on the outskirts of Pachuca which represents the appearance at a distance of being covered with spikes. The sides of the mountain are closely studded with stone columns or palisades. These columns are five to twelve feet long and as large around as an average man's body. It is a remarkable uplift of nature, which has the appearance, however, of being the handiwork of human beings. One side of the mountain is almost perpendicular and the stone columns protrude from the surface at right angles, and form an impressive picture. The stone is as hard as flint and has withstood the elements for ages. The spikes form a natural battlement that makes the mountain appear from a distance like some ancient fort.

HOW THE FRENCH SAVE

What becomes of old sardine boxes, tomato cans and cans of all kinds? In France, where nothing is allowed to go to waste, they gather them up and use them—to cut into tin soldiers. In France, too, the old boots and shoes are collected and every part is used over again. The work is mostly done by convicts in prisons. They take the boots and shoes to pieces and soak them; then the uppers are cut over into children's shoes, or, if they are too far gone for that, a peculiar kind of pressed leather is made by some chemical action. The nails are saved and sold, and the scraps go to the farms to fertilize the soil. Who would have thought it possible to make anything out of old saws? Yet it is said that many of the finest surgical instruments and some of those used by engineers are manufactured from the steel that first did duty in saws, the quality being fine.

CHILD LIVES TWO YEARS WITH PIN IN THROAT

Clara Kucher, three years old, daughter of Mrs. Anna Kucher of 123 Seventh street, New York, has been ill for the last two years, apparently suffering from slow strangulation and malnutrition. Several physicians examined her and numerous X-ray examinations were made, but none of them disclosed the source of the trouble.

The other day Mrs. Kucher called in Dr. Max Schroeder, and the physician looked down the child's throat. He saw something shiny several inches down and asked the mother if the child ever had swallowed anything.

"She swallowed three safety pins two years ago," said Mrs. Kucher after reflection, "but the doctors thought she had coughed them up. An X-ray examination did not show them."

Dr. Schroeder made a more careful examination and found the three safety pins, one of which was open, embedded in the child's throat. He made an incision and removed them, and before the end of the day Clara was asking for food for the first time in two years.

SINGING SANDS

The singing sands of Lake Michigan are discussed in Science by Mr. W. D. Richardson, who advances a new hypothesis on the subject. The sands in question are found everywhere near the water's edge throughout the dune region, which borders nearly the whole eastern side of the lake from Gary to Mackinac. The characteristic sound is heard when one walks in the sand or pushes a stick or other object through it, but only when the sand is dry. The sound-producing sands only extend back from the water as far as the line of driftwood, indicating the boundary reached by waves during storms; beyond this limit sand having exactly the same appearance, microscopic as well as macroscopic, produces no sound. The writer suggests that periodical wetting by the water of the lake deposits a thin film of salts, including calcium and magnesium carbonates, upon the grains of sand. This film creates considerable friction when the grains are rubbed together and thus causes the sound, the effect being similar to that of rosin on a violin bow. When the sand is carried farther inland by the wind to form the dunes, much of the salt film is rubbed off, and leaching by rain subsequently completes its removal; hence the sands cease to be "musical."

WOMAN ASLEEP TWO YEARS

Mrs. Clara Jorgenson, Racine, Wis., who has been asleep at the County Asylum for more than two years, has regained consciousness.

A sister-in-law of Mrs. Jorgenson's visited the institution, bringing with her Mrs. Jorgenson's six-year-old son. It is thought that the child awakened the memories in the woman's mind that restored her to a normal condition.

It has been necessary to feed and care for Mrs. Jorgenson as if she were a helpless babe, according to Mrs. Peters, matron of the institution.

She walked the other day, used table utensils and fed herself with ease. She walked a short distance about the ward, but returned to her invalid's chair exhausted from the exertion to which she had been unaccustomed.

"I could not, no matter how I tried, break the spell which seemed to keep me bound in another world in which I lived," said Mrs. Jorgenson in an interview. She said that although she could not open her eyes, utter a word or move a muscle, she knew each day's events and heard each word spoken to her.

Mrs. Jorgenson clearly remembered World War events, knew of relatives who had been in the service, told the names of those who had remained on the battlefield of France, where they fell, and knew some had returned home safely and the dates of their arrivals.

SECRET MESSAGES SENT BY INFRA-RED RAYS

M. Cherbonneau, the famous French engineer, studied the infra-red rays of the spectrum of light as a means of secret signalling during the war and now Technique Moderne (Paris) describes some of the applications he made of them. One of these is a system of direct optical telegraphy, but quite invisible except at the receiving point to which they are destined.

The transmitting station has a source of light that is rich in infra-red rays, an incandescent lamp, for example, situated at the focus of a concave mirror the front of which is closed by black glass. By means of a shutter, the lamp is masked and unmasked according to the telegraphic code.

The receiving station has a concave mirror which concentrates the infra-red rays at its focus, through which passes an endless ribbon covered with sulphide of zinc and moved by clockwork. Sulphide of zinc under the action of light is phosphorescent, but the infra-red rays destroy its phosphorescence. A ray of cold blue light is turned on the ribbon and whenever the infra-red rays strike it they make a dark dot or dash, which of course is wiped out as soon as it passes once more into the influence of the blue light.

Another application was used by the French navy in the harbor of Hyeres. It consisted of a source of infra-red rays on one point at the entrance to the harbor and a receiving station at the point on the opposite side, about six miles distant. If any boat passed between these it intercepted the infra-red rays, and the observer at the receiving station became at once aware of it because the black line on the phosphorescent band was immediately interrupted.

WHENCE THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS COME

Within a radius of six or seven miles from Schonbach, Czecho-Slovakia, there are twenty-one villages whose inhabitants are employed in the manufacture of stringed musical instruments, writes United States Trade Commissioner Vladimir A. Geringer, from Prague. Of the 6,000 residents of Schonbach almost 4,000 are engaged in this home industry, among them both women and children. In the making of one instrument many different workers take part.

Not more than fifteen miles from Schonbach is the town of Kraslice (Graslitz), where brass and wind instruments, such as trumpets, cornets, trombones, clarinets, flutes, etc., are manufactured, as well as home industry products. Kralove Hradec is also noted for its production of brass and wind instruments.

In addition to the towns of Schonbach and Kraslice (Graslitz) and the surrounding villages there are many manufacturers of musical instruments scattered through Czecho-Slovakia whose products are exported to all parts of the world. Many of the instruments normally bring high prices, because of their exceptionally fine tone and quality. Outside of pianos and organs, they are produced mostly by small manufacturers.

SOME DISEASES RUN IN FAMILIES

Certain diseases appear to be family affairs, others are found to be specially prevalent in certain districts, probably from intermarriage of the inhabitants. Dr. J. Audry tells in the Lyon Medical Journal, France) of several strange cases of this sort.

Hemophilia, or tendency to bleed, is prevalent in parts of Southern Germany and in Switzerland; in the Gintrac district there are 48 German, 9 Swiss and 8 French families that have it. The Czarevitch was a "bleeder," as are the sons of Prince Henry of Prussia and their mother.

The Drieux family in France has been celebrated for its moles for 500 years. A physician found forty-one members of the family with moles, all at points where in the early days the families with familial disease transmitted the moles to their children.

The village of Yzeaux is noted for the six fingers and toes of its inhabitants and in the eighteenth century nearly all of them were so deformed, but this appears to be dying out, as only three families have it now.

It seems to be the rule that with familial malformations and diseases of a continuous heredity type, if the subject is sound, no restrictions need be imposed on marriage, and the same applies to the male descendants in families with familial disease transmitted by the mother. Familial diseases of the fraternal or recessive type, such as deafmutism and pigmented retinitis, are less inclined to reappear than the others mentioned above, but consanguineous marriages, no matter how remote the connection, are sometimes highly dangerous.

PET MONKEY CONVICTS COUPLE OF MURDER

Often a mute witness has given the most convincing evidence in a suit or trial at law. For example, many a dog, by displaying naturally his affection for his master, has confounded the pretenses of the man claiming to own him. It remained for a monkey, the only witness of the crime, to convict two persons of murder.

The Ackermann circus was giving performances in Constantinople not long ago. Its manager was found dead in front of a cage containing an Indian monkey, to which, because of his affectionate playfulness, had been given the name Scamp. It was shown easily that the manager had been stabbed to death at the moment he was feeding Scamp, of which he was very fond. By the man's body lay a tin dish and remnants of the meal he had been giving the monkey.

Two members of the circus troupe, a married couple named Starr, were suspected of the crime, for they had quarrelled with the other performers. But the Starrs protested their innocence vigorously and no criminating evidence against them could be found.

So the judge determined to reconstruct the murder; a plan adopted not infrequently and derived, probably, from the ancient trial by ordeal.

At the hour at which Scamp had been fed, the circus tent was deserted by all employees. Then the Starrs were ordered to approach Scamp's cage, which they did rather hesitatingly. The instant the monkey saw them he flew into a paroxysm of rage. Never before had he exhibited such violent anger, for, as has been said, he is of an amiable and playful disposition. Chattering fiercely, Scamp hurled himself against the bars of the cage, making frantic attempts to seize the Starrs. Suddenly fear succeeded rage, and Scamp cowered in a corner, shivering and whimpering.

The judge and police were deeply impressed by the scene, during which Starr and his wife tried vainly to maintain composure.

At the next sitting of the court the monkey was led in. Only a few minutes before Scamp, in high good humor, had permitted some strangers to pat his head, stroke his back and "shake hands" with him. But scarcely had he entered the court room and caught sight of the Starrs than he became infuriated and tried to spring at them. Then again the remembrances of the tragedy he had seen overwhelmed Scamp and he shrank from them, straining at his chain to escape from their presence.

No spoken evidence could have been half so eloquent. Despite their emphatic and repeated denials, Starr and his wife were adjudged guilty.

KILLS 50 HENS, FINDS GEM

It was a tedious process for H. L. Walbourne, a grocer and butcher of Davenport, Ia., to recover a lost diamond valued at $600, for he was unable to tell which of his 150 chickens had swallowed the gem.

The diamond was missing from his ring after he had unloaded the chickens from crates and placed them in a coop and he suspected one of the fowls had eaten it. He found the jewel later in the gizzard of the fiftieth fowl he salughtered.

Statement of the ownership, management, etc., required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, of "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," published semi-monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1920. State of New York, County of New York:—Before me, a Commissioner of Deeds in and for the city and county aforesaid, personally appeared Luis Senarens, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of the "MYSTERY MAGAZINE," and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, etc., of the aforesaid publication, for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of August 24, 1912, embodied in section 443, Postal Laws and Regulations, to wit:

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor and business managers are: Publisher—Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Editor—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Managing Editor—None; Business Manager—Luis Senarens, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

2. That the owners are: Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; Harry E. Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.; N. Hastings Wolff, 168 West 23d St., New York, N. Y.

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36 "Trailed by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robert W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain On Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
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44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
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ABOUT ELECTRIC FISH

Certain fishes exhibit peculiar electrical phenomena of muscles, nerves and heart, which have given them the name of electric fishes. These have the power of giving electrical shocks from specially constructed and living electrical batteries.

There are in all about fifty species of these fishes, but the electrical properties of only five or six have been studied in detail. The best known are various species of torpedo, belonging to the skate family, found in the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas; the gymnotus, an eel found in the region of the Orinoco in South America; the malapterurus, the raash or thunderer fish, of the Arabs, a native of the Nile, the Niger, Senegal and other African rivers, and various species of skate found in the seas around Great Britain.

The electrical fishes do not belong to any one class or group—some are found in fresh water, while others inhabit the sea. They possess two distinct types of electrical organs. One closely relates in structure to muscle, as found in the torpedo, gymnotus and skate, while the other presents more of the characters of the secreting gland of the thunderer.

BOTTOM DROPPED OUT OF DEEGAN'S PASTURE

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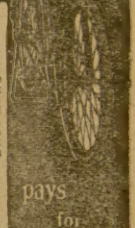

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